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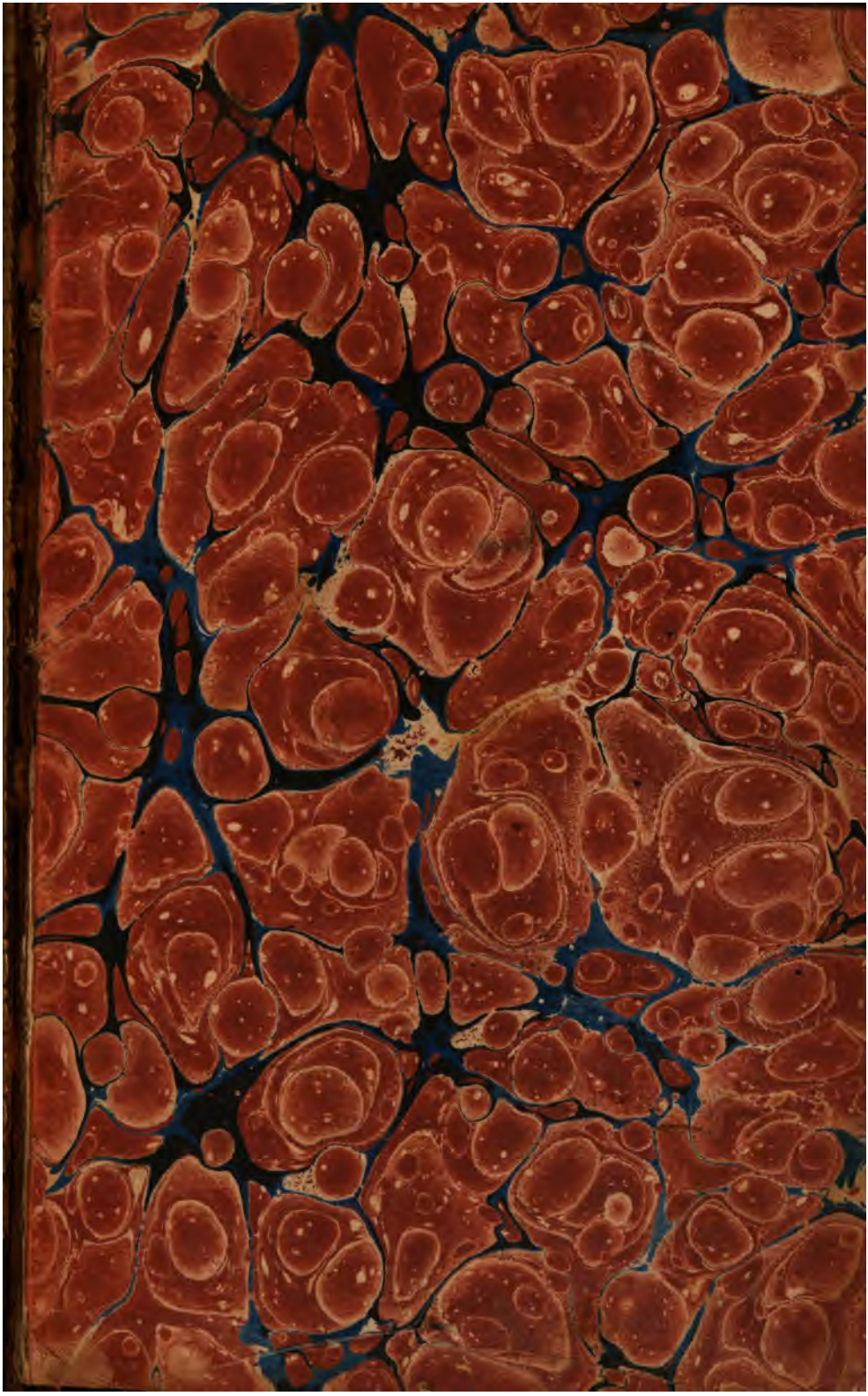

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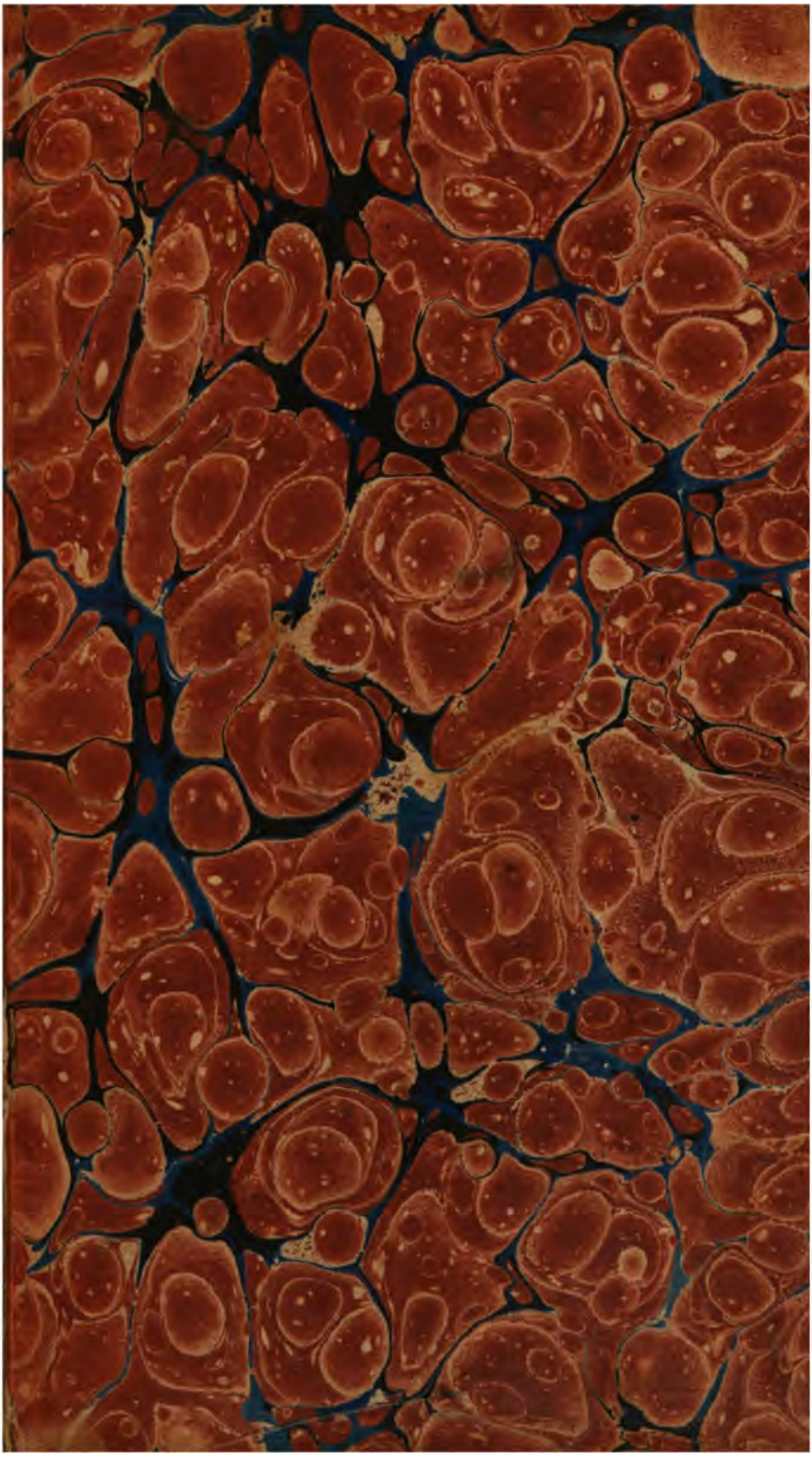

THE

WORKS

OF

ROBT. LEIGHTON, D.D.

SOMETIME

BISHOP OF DUNBLANE,

AFTERWARDS

ARCHBISHOP OF GLASGOW.

A new and enlarged Edition:

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LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY THE

REV. G. JERMENT.

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AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE

CREED.

1 Tim. iii. 9.

Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.

THAT which was the Apostle's practice, as he expresses it, 1 Cor. ix. 22. is the standing duty of all the ministers of the same gospel: *To the weak to become as weak, to gain the weak; and all things to all men, that if by any means they may save some.* And truly one main part of observance of that rule, is in descending to the instruction of the most ignorant in the principles of the Christian religion. What I aim at, at this time, is a very brief and plain Exposition of the Articles of our Faith, as we have them in that summary confession. Not staying you at all on the antiquity and authority of it, both which are confest; whether it was penned by the Apostles, or by others in their time, or soon after it, it doth very clearly and briefly contain the main of their divine doctrine.

But though it be altogether consonant with the scriptures, yet not being a part of the canon of them, I chuse these words as pertinent to our intended explication of it: they are indeed here, as they stand in the context, a rule for deacons; but without question, taken in general, they express the great duty of all that are Christians, *to keep the mystery of faith*, &c.

You see clearly in them a rich jewel, and a precious cabinet fit for it; the mystery of faith laid up, and kept in a pure conscience. And these two are not only suitable, but inseparable, as we see in the first chapter of this epistle[a], they are preserved and lost together, they suffer the same shipwreck: the casting away of the one is the shipwreck of the other; if the one perish, the other cannot escape. Every believer is the temple of God; and as the tables of the law were kept in the ark, this pure conscience is the ark that holds the mystery of faith. You think you are believers, you do not question that, and would take it ill that others should; it is very hard to convince men of unbelief, directly and in itself: but if you do believe this truth, that the only receptacle of saving faith is a purified conscience, then I beseech you, question yourselves concerning that; being truly answered in it, it will resolve you touching your faith, which you are so loth to question in itself. Are your consciences pure? Have you a living hatred and antipathy against all impurity? Then sure faith is there; for it is the peculiar virtue of faith to purify the heart[b], and the heart so purified is the proper residence of faith, where it dwells and rests as in its natural place. But have you consciences that can lodge pride, and lust, and malice, and covetousness, and such like pollutions? Then be no more so impudent as to say, you believe, nor deceive yourselves so far as to think you do. The blood of Christ never speaks peace to any conscience, but the same that it purifies *from dead works to serve the living God*[c]. As that blood is a sacrifice to appease God's wrath, so it is a laver to wash our souls, and to serve both ends; it is, as was the blood of legal sacrifices, both offered up to God and sprinkled upon us, as both are exprest in the Apostle's words there. Do not think that God will throw this jewel of faith into a sty or kennel, a conscience full of defilement and

[a] Ver. 10. [b] Acts xv. [c] Heb. ix. 13, 14.

uncleanness. Therefore if you have any mind to these comforts and peace, that faith brings along with it, be careful to lodge it where it delights to dwell, in a pure conscience. Notwithstanding the unbelieving world mocks the name of *purity*; yet study you above all, that purity and holiness that may make your souls a fit abode for *faith*, and that peace which it worketh, and that Holy Spirit that works both in you.

Faith is either the doctrine which we believe, or that grace by which we believe that doctrine: Here I conceive it is both met and united in the soul, as they say of the understanding in the schools, *Intelligendo fit illud quod intelligit;* so faith apprehending its proper object, is made one with it. Faith is kept in a pure conscience, that is, both that pure doctrine of the gospel which faith receives, and that faith which receives it, are together fitly placed and preserved, when they are laid up in a pure conscience. The doctrine of faith cannot be received into nor laid up in the soul, but by that faith that believes it, and that faith hath no being without believing that doctrine; and both are fitly called the *mystery of faith.* The doctrine is mysterious, and it is a mysterious work to beget faith in the heart to receive it: for the things we must believe are very high and heavenly, and our hearts are earthly and base till the Spirit renew them. In our confession of faith we have both exprest; the first word is a profession of faith, which receives the doctrine as true, *I believe;* and the articles themselves contain the sum of the doctrine believed: and if we that profess this faith have within us pure consciences, wherein the mystery of faith, the doctrine of faith believed, and the grace of faith believing it, both together as one, may reside, dwell, and be preserved; then is the text compleatly answered in the present subject.

Remember then, since we profess this faith, Which is the proper seat of faith? Not our books,

our tongues only, or memories, or judgment, but our conscience; and not our natural conscience defiled and stuffed with sin, but renewed and sanctified by grace, *holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.*

I believe in God the Father.]

Not to insist here on the nature of faith, taking it as comprehensively as we can, it is no other but a supernatural belief of God, and confidence in him. Whether we call God, or the Word of God, the object of faith, there is no material difference, for it is God in the word, as revealed by the word, that is that object. God is that *veritas incomplexa* (as they speak) that faith embraces; and the word, the *veritas complexa*, that contains what we are to conceive of God, and believe concerning him. As, in the gospel, the peculiar object of that faith that saves fallen man, it is all one, whether we say it is Christ, or the promises: For it is Christ revealed and held forth in the promises that faith lays hold on; *In him are all the promises of God Yea, and in him, Amen.* So that it is all one act of faith that lays hold on Christ, and on the promises, for they are all one, he is in them; and therefore faith rests on them, because they include Christ who is our rest and our peace, as a man at once receives a ring and the precious stone that is set in it. This once rightly understood, any further dispute about placing faith in the understanding or the will, is possibly in itself not at all needful, sure I am it is no way useful for you. Take heed of carnal profane presumption, for that will undo you; and labour to be sure of such a faith as dwells in a pure conscience, and it will be sure not to deceive you.

That confidence which this expression bears, believing in God, supposes certainly (as all agree) a right belief concerning God, both that he is, and what he is, according as the word reveals him, especially what he is relating to us; these three we have together[d], *He that cometh to God must be-*

[d] Heb. xi. 6.

lieve that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. 1. That he is. 2. To trust his word, believing that he is true to his promises, a rewarder of them that seek him. 3. Upon these follows coming to him, which is this, believing in that God that the Psalmist speaks of, that reliance and resting of the soul upon him, that results from that right belief concerning him, and trusting the testimony of his word, as it reveals him.

We have discoursed of the attributes of God elsewhere, as also of the Trinity, which is here expressed in these words; *I believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.* That sublime mystery is to be cautiously treated of, and rather humbly to be admired, than curiously dived into. The day will come (truly *a day*, for here we are beset with the gloomy nightly shades of ignorance) wherein we shall see him as he is. In the mean time let us devoutly worship him, as he has revealed himself to us; for this is the true way to that heavenly country, where we shall see him face to face. And it is our interest here to believe the trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead, and to trust in them as such, for this is the spring of all our hope, that the middle of the three became our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit our guide and teacher, and the Father reconciles us to himself by the Son, and renews us by the Spirit.

Father.] First the Father of his only begotten Son Christ, and through him our Father by the grace of adoption. And so Christ does clearly insinuate the order of our filiation, *I ascend to my Father, and your Father, my God and your God.* He says, not to our Father, but to my Father and your Father, first mine, and then yours through me.

Almighty.] This also belongs to the attributes of God, so we shall be but short on it here.

Almighty, able in himself to do all things, and the source of all power in others, all the power in

the creature being derived from him; so that it cannot altogether equal his, nor resist him, no, nor at all be without him. Whosoever they be that boast most in their own strength in any kind, and swell highest in conceit of it, are yet but as a brittle glass in the hand of God; he cannot only break it to pieces by the strength of his hand, but if he do but withdraw his hand from supporting it, it will fall and break of itself.

Maker of heaven and earth.] The Son and the Spirit were, with the Father, authors of the creation; but it is ascribed to the Father particularly, in regard of the order and manner of their working. Whether natural reason may evince the creation of the world, we will not dispute; we know that he that had very much of that, and is the great master of it in the schools, could not see it by that light; yet there is enough in reason to answer all the false cavils of profane men, and very much to justify the truth of this we believe. However we must endeavour to believe it by divine faith, according to that of the apostle, *By faith we believe that the worlds were framed by the word of God.* And this is the first article we meet withal in the scriptures, and our faith is put to it in a very high point in the very entrance.

In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth, speaking like himself; it is not proved by demonstrations nor any kind of arguments, but asserted by the authority of God: and with that which begins the books of the law, *John* begins his gospel; that upon his word, that by his word made the world, we may believe that he did so.

This is fitly added to the title of Almighty as a work of almighty power, and therefore a clear testimony of it, and both together will suit with our profession of believing in him; for this is a main support of our faith, to be persuaded of his power on whom we trust. *Our God is able to deliver us* (said they,) and *Abraham,* the apostle says, *offered*

up his Son, accounting, or reasoning with himself, or laying his reckoning, *that God was able to raise him from the dead.*

We make more bold to speak out our own questioning the love and good-will of God, because we think we have some reason in that from our own unworthiness, but if we would sound our own hearts, we would often find in our distrusts some secret doubtings of God's power. *Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?* said they, though accustomed to miracles, yet still unbelieving. We think we are strongly enough persuaded of this, but our hearts deceive us, *quæ scimus cùm necesse non est, ea in necessitate nescimus*, S. BERN. The heart is deceitful[e], where he is speaking of trusting. It is not for nothing that God by his prophets so often inculcates this doctrine of his power, and this great instance of it, the Creation, when he promises great deliverances to his church, and the destruction of their enemies[f]. What can be too hard for him, that found it not too hard to make a world of nothing? If thou look on the public, the enemies of the church are strong; if on thyself, thou hast indeed strong corruptions within, and strong temptations without; yet none of these are almighty, as thy God is. What is it thou would have done, that he cannot do if he think fit? And if he think it not fit, if thou art one of his children thou wilt think with him, thou wilt reverence his wisdom, and rest satisfied with his will. This is believing indeed; the rolling all our desires and burdens over upon an almighty God; and where this is, it cannot chuse but establish the heart in the midst of troubles, and give it a calm within in the midst of the greatest storms.

And try what other confidences you will, they shall prove vain and lying in the day of trouble; he that thinks to quiet his mind, and find rest by worldly comfort, is, as *Solomon* compares his drunkard, *as one that lies down in the midst of the sea*,

[e] Gen. xvii. 9. [f] Isa xlv. 12, and li. 12.

that sleepeth on the top of a mast; he can have but unsettled rest and repose that lies there, *but he that trusteth in the Lord, is as Mount Sion that cannot be removed.* When we lean upon other props besides God, they prove broken reeds that not only fail, but pierce the hand that leans on them[g].

There is yet another thing in this article, that serves farther to uphold our faith, that of necessity he that made the world by his power, doth likewise rule it by his providence. It is so great a fabric, as cannot be upheld and governed by any less power, than that which made it. He did not frame this world as the carpenter his ship, to put it into other hands and look no more after it; but as he made it, he is the continual pilot of it, sits still at the helm and guides it, yea he commands the winds and seas, and they obey him. And this serves much for the comfort of the godly, but I cannot here insist on it.

And in Jesus Christ.]

The two great works of God by which he is known to us, are creation, and redemption which is a new or second creation. The Son of God, as God, was with the Father, as the worker of the former; but as God-man, he is the author of the latter. St. *John* begins his gospel with the first, and from that passes on to the second. *In the beginning was the word*, &c. Ver. 1. *By him were all things made.* But Ver. 14. the other is exprest, *The word was made flesh, and he dwelt among us*, had a tent like ours, and made of the same materials. He adds, *He was full of grace and truth*, and for that end, as there follows, *that we might all receive of his fulness, grace for grace.* And this is that great work of new creation; therefore the prophet *Isaiah*[h], foretelling this great work from the Lord's own mouth, speaks of it in these terms, *That I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundation of the*

[g] Jer. xvii. 7. [h] Chap. li. 16.

earth, and say unto Sion, thou art my people. That making of a new people to himself in Christ, is as the framing of heaven and earth. Now this restoration by Jesus Christ, supposes the ruin and misery of man by his fall, that sin and death under which he is born. This we all seem to know and acknowledge, and well we may, for we daily feel the woeful fruits of that bitter root; but the truth is, the greatest part of us are not fully convinced, and therefore do not consider of this gulf of wretchedness into which we are fallen. If we were, there would be more cries amongst us for help to be drawn out and delivered from it; this great deliverer, this Saviour would be of more use, and of more esteem with us. But I cannot now insist on that point.

Only consider that this makes the necessity of a Mediator. The disunion and distance, that sin hath made betwixt God and man, cannot be made up but by a Mediator, one to come betwixt; so that there is now no believing in God the Father, but by this believing in Jesus his Son, no appearing without horror, yea without perdition before so just a judge highly offended, but by the intervention of so powerful a reconciler, able to satisfy and appease him, and he tells it us plainly and graciously, that we mistake not our way, *No man comes unto the Father but by me.*

Few are our thoughts concerning God, and returning to him, but if we have any, this is our unhappiness that naturally we are subject to leave out Christ in them.

We think there is something to be done, we talk of repentance, of prayer, and of amendment, though we have not these neither; but if we had these, there is yet one thing necessary above all these, that we forget, there is absolute need of a Mediator to make our peace, and reduce us into favour with God, one that must for that end do and suffer for us, what we can neither do nor suffer;

though we could shed rivers of tears, they cannot wash out the stain of any one sin; yea there is some pollution in our very tears; so that they themselves have need to be washed in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ.] Our anointed Saviour, anointed to be our king, our great high priest, and our prophet, and in all those our Saviour; our prophet to teach us the way of salvation; our priest to purchase it for us; and our king to lead and protect us in the way, and to bring us safe to the end of it. Thus is his name full of sweetness and comfort, *mel in ore, in aure melos, in corde medicina,* as *Bernard* speaks. It is a rich ointment, and in the preaching of the gospel *an ointment poured forth,* diffusing its fragrant smell, for which the virgins, the chaste purified souls of believers love him, such as have their senses exercised, as the apostle speaks, their spiritual smelling not obstructed with the pollutions of the world, but quick and open to receive and be refreshed with the smell of this precious name of Jesus.

His only Son.] Other sons he hath, angels and men by creation and adoption, but this his only begotten Son as God, by eternal and ineffable generation, and as man peculiarly the Son of God, both in regard of his singular unexampled conception by the Holy Ghost, and by that personal union with the Deity, which accompanied that conception, and by that fulness of all grace which flowed from that union. The unfolding of these would require a long time, and after all, more would remain unsaid and unconceived by us; for *his generation who can declare?*

Let us remember this, that our sonship is the product of his[i], *He is the only begotten Son of God,* and yet[k], *To as many as received him he gave this privilege to be the Sons of God.*

Our Lord.] Both by our loyal subjection to him,

[i] John. i. 14. [k] Ver. xii.

and our peculiar interest in him, these go together; willing subjection and obedience to his laws is an inseparable companion, and therefore a certain evidence of our interest in his grace.

Conceived by the Holy Ghost.]

This is that great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh; the King of Glory after a manner divesting himself of his royal robes, and truly putting on the form of a servant, the Holy Ghost framing him a body in the virgin's womb; not that it was impossible to have made his human nature sinless in the ordinary way (though the schools usually give that reason) but that by that miraculous and peculiar manner of birth, he might be declared more than man, as being a way more congruous both to the greatness of his person, and the purity of his human nature.

Born of the Virgin Mary.]

He was not only of the same nature with man, which he might have been by a new created humanity, but of the same stock, and so a fit Saviour, a near *kinsman*, as the word, that in *Hebrew* is a *Redeemer*, doth signify bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. We see then the person of our Mediator very fit for that his office, having both the natures of the parties at variance which he was to reconcile. And this happy meeting of *God* and *man* in the person of Christ, to look no further, was a very great step to the agreement, and a strong pledge of its accomplishment. To see the nature of man that was an enemy, received into so close embraces with the Deity, as within the compass of one person, promised infallibly a reconcilement of the persons of men unto God. There the treaty of peace began, and was exceedingly promoted by that very beginning, so that in it, there was a sure presage of the success, it was indeed as they say of a good beginning, *Dimidium facti.* Had God and man treated any where but in the person of Christ, a peace had never been concluded, yea, it had broke up at first;

but being in him, it could not fail, for in him they were already one, one person, so there they could not but agree, *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.*

2. Considering the work to be done in this agreement, as well as the persons to be agreed; it was altogether needful that the undertaker should be God and man*; the mediation was not a bare matter of word, but there was such a wrong done as required a satisfaction should be made, (we speak not what God might absolutely have done, but what was to be done suitable to God's end, that was for the joint glory of justice and mercy, *That mercy and truth might meet, and righteousness and peace kiss each other;)* and because the party offending was not able for it, he that would effectually suit for him, must likewise satisfy for him. And this Jesus Christ did, as here follows. Now that he might do this, it was necessary that he should be *God* able to save, and *man* fit to save man; *man* that he might suffer, and *God* that his suffering might be satisfying; *Man* that he might die, and *God* that his death might have value to purchase life to us.

The Son was fit to be incarnate for his work, the middle person in the Godhead to be man's Mediator with God. That we had lost was the dignity of the sons of God, and therefore his *only Son, only* fit to restore us to it: The beauty defaced in us was the image of God; therefore the repairing and reimparting it, a fit work for his purest and most perfect image, his Son, the character of his person.

Now this incarnation of the word, the Son of God, is the foundation of all our hopes; the sense of that great promise, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head:* And many others of the same substance in the prophets; the great salvation so often foretold, and so long expected by the *Jews.* When this was fulfilled, that a virgin did conceive by the Holy Ghost, *Then did the heavens drop down*

* Humana divinitas & divina humanitas.

righteousness from above, and the earth bring forth salvation[l]. This seems to be that which the church did so earnestly wish, *Oh that thou wert as my brother*[m].

Suffered under Pontius Pilate.]

Though all his life was one continual act of suffering, from his living in the cratch to his hanging on the cross; yet because of the shortness of this confession, as likewise because this last act was the greatest and most remarkable of his sufferings, and the scripture itself doth (as such) mention it most frequently, therefore it is here immediately subjoined to the article of his birth.

It is not for nothing that we have the name of the *Roman* judge here exprest, under whom he suffered; though it is nothing to his credit, yet it is to the credit of divine wisdom. Even this, considering the nature and end of Christ's death, being to satisfy a pronounced sentence of justice; though for others, it was a very agreeable circumstance that he should not be suddenly or tumultuarily murdered, but be judicially, though unjustly condemned.

Crucified.] Besides, it made his suffering more public and solemn; and the divine providence ordered this, that he should suffer under a *Roman* judge, and so fall under this *Roman* kind of punishment, being in itself a very shameful and painful kind of death, and by the sentence of the law accursed, that we might have the more evidence of our deliverance from that shame, and pain, and curse, that was due to us; *The chastisement of our peace was upon him*, says the prophet, *and by his stripes we are healed.*

Suffered.] That he died, and what kind of death you see is exprest: but as many particular sufferings of his body are not here mentioned, so none of those of his soul, but all comprehended in this general word, *He suffered.* Those were too great to be duly exprest in so short a form, and therefore are bet-

[l] Isa. xlv. [m] Cant. viii.

ter exprest by supposing them, and including them only in this, *He suffered.* As he that drew the father among others, beholding the sacrificing of his own daughter, signified the grief of the rest in their gestures, and visages, and tears, but drew the father vailed; so here the crucifying and death of our Saviour are exprest, but the unspeakable conflicts of his soul are vailed under the general term of suffering. But sure that invisible cup that came from his Father's hand, was far more bitter than the gall and vinegar from the hand of his enemies; the piercing of his soul far sharper than the nails and thorns: he could answer these sweetly with, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* But these other pangs drew from him another kind of word, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.*

Died.] No less would serve, and therefore he was *obedient even unto the death,* as the sentence against us did bear, and the sacrifices of the law did prefigure. When the sacrifices drew back and went unwillingly to the place, the Heathens accounted it an ill presage: never sacrifice more willing than Christ, *I lay down my life for my sheep,* (says he) *and no man taketh it from me. As a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth*[n], *He gave his back to the smiters, &c. For this hour came I into the world.* And this his death is our life, though by it we are not freed from this temporal death; yet, which is infinitely more, we are delivered from eternal death, and, which is yet more, entitled to eternal life; and therefore do no more suffer this temporal death as a curse, but enjoy it as a blessing, and may look upon it now, (such as are in Christ, none other) not only as a day of deliverance, but of coronation; the exchange of our present rags for long white robes, and a crown that fadeth not away.

Buried.] For the further assurance of his death,

[n] Isaiah l.

and glory of his resurrection, as likewise to commend the grave to us, as now a very sweet resting place, he hath warmed the cold bed of the grave to a Christian, that he need not fear to lie down in it, nor doubt that he shall rise again, as we know and are after to hear that he did.

Descended into hell.] The more noise hath been about this clause, I shall make the less. The conceit of the descent of Christ's soul into the place of the damned, to say no more nor harder of it, can never be made the necessary sense of these words; nor is there any other ground in scripture, or any due end of such a descent, either agreed on, or at all alledgable to persuade the chusing it as the best sense of them. Not to contest other interpretations, I conceive, with submission, that it differs not much (possibly nothing) from the plain word of his *burial*. Not that the author or authors of this so brief a confession, would express one thing by divers words, but that it may be, in the more antient copies, only the one of them hath been in the text; and in after copies, in transcriber's hands, the other hath crept into it, out of the margin. But retaining it by all means as it is, it may signify the abode and continuance of Christ's body in the grave; in which time he seemed to have been swallowed up of death, and that the pit had shut her mouth on him: but it appeared quickly otherwise; for, *The third day he arose from the dead.*

These are great things indeed that are spoken concerning Jesus Christ, his birth and sufferings; but the greater our unhappiness, if we have no portion in them. To hear of them only, and to enjoy nothing of them, is most miserable; and thus it is through our unbelief. Were it as common to believe in him, as to repeat these words, or to come to church and hear this gospel preached, then you would all make a pretty good plea on it; but believe it, it is another kind of thing to believe than all that, or than any thing that the most of us yet

know. My brethren, do not deceive yourselves; that common highway faith will not serve, you are for all that still unbelierers in Christ's account; and if so, for all the riches of comfort that are in him, you can receive none from him. It is a sad word that he says, *Because ye believe not in me, ye shall die in your sins;* "Though I died for sins, not mine own but others, yet you remaining in ungodliness and unbelief, that shall do you no good, ye shall die in your sins for all that." It is such a faith as endears Christ to the soul, unites it to him, makes Christ and it one, that makes all that is his to become ours; then we shall conclude aright, Christ hath suffered, therefore I shall not. As he said to them that came to take him, *Is it I you seek? then let these go free;* so to the law and justice of God, "Seeeing you have sought and laid hold on me, and made me suffer, let these go free that lay hold on me by faith; if you have any thing to say to them, I am to answer for them, yea I have done it already."

2. You that believe and live by this death, be often in reviewing it, and meditating on it, that your souls may be ravished with the admiration of such love, and warmed with a reflex love to him*. Other wonders, as you say, last for a while, but this is a lasting wonder, not to the ignorant, (the cause of wonder at other things, is ignorance indeed) but this is an everlasting wonder to those that know it best, *viz.* to the very angels. Let that loved Jesus be fixed in your hearts, who was for you nailed to the cross†. *St. Bernard* wonders that men should think on any thing else; *quantæ insaniæ post tanti Regis adventum aliis negotiis*, &c. Sure it is great folly to think and esteem much of any thing here, after his appearing; the sun arising, drowns all the stars. And withal be daily crucifying sin in yourselves, be avenged on it for his sake, and kill it because it killed him.

* Mira Dei dignitas, mira indignitas nostra.

† Donec totus fixus in corde, qui totus fixus in cruce.

3. Will you think any thing hard to do or suffer for him, that undertook and performed to the full so much for you*? If you had rather be your own than Christ's, much good do it you with yourselves; but know, that if you are not Christ's but your own, you must look for as little of him to be yours. If ye be your own, you must bear all your own sins, and all the wrath that is due to them. But if you like not that, and resolve to be no more your own but Christ's, then what have you to do but cheerfully to embrace, yea earnestly to seek all opportunities to do him service?

4. These are the steps of Christ's humiliation; look on them then so, as to study to be like him particularly in that: surely the soul that hath most of Christ, hath most humility. It is the lesson he peculiarly recommends to us from his own example, which is the shortest and most effectual way of teaching. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.* He says well, "Let man be ashamed to be any longer proud, for whom God himself humbled himself so low†." He became humble to expiate our pride, and yet we will not banish that pride that undid us, and follow that way of salvation, which is humility. Jesus Christ is indeed the lilly of the vallies, he grows no where but in the humble heart.

Rose again the third day.]

When humbled to the lowest, then nearest his exaltation, as *Joseph* in the prison. He could die, for he was a man, and a man for that purpose, that he might die; but he could not be overcome by death, for he was God, yea, by dying, he overcame death, and so shewed himself truly the Lord of life. He strangled that lion in his own den. The whale swallowed *Jonah*, but it could not digest him; it

* Intolerabilis est impudentia, ut ubi se exinanivit majestas, vermiculus infletur & intumescat.

† Erubescat homo superbus esse, propter quem humilis factus est Deus.

was forced to cast him up again at the appointed time, the same with the time here specified, wherein the prophet was a figure of this great prophet Jesus Christ. The grave hath a terrible appetite, devours all, and still cries, *Give, give, and never hath enough*, as *Agur* says; yet for all its appetite, Christ was too great a morsel for it to digest, too strong a prisoner for all its bars and iron gates to keep him in. *It was impossible he should be holden of it*, says St. *Peter*°.

He hath made a breach through death, opened up a passage on the other side of it into life, though otherwise indeed *vestigia nulla retrorsum.* They that believe, that lay hold on him by faith, they come through with him, follow him out at the same breach, pass through death into heaven; but the rest find not the passage out, it is as the Red Sea, passable only to the *Israelites*, therefore they must of necessity sink quite downwards through the grave into hell, through the first death into the second, and that is the most terrible of all:-that death is indeed what one called the other, *The most terrible of all terribles, The king of terrors*, as it is in *Job.*

Now the only assurance of that happy second resurrection to the life of glory hereafter, is the first resurrection here to the life of grace; *Blessed are they that are partakers of the first resurrection, for on such the second death hath no power.* For the resurrection of Jesus Christ is to the believer, the evidence of his redemption compleated, that all was paid by Christ as our surety, and so he set at liberty, (which the apostle teaches us, when he says, *He arose for our righteousness;* and again, *It is God that justifies, who shall condemn; it is Christ that died, or rather that is risen again).* Nor is it only the pattern and pledge of a believer's resurrrection, but it is the efficient both of that last resurrection of his body to glory, and of the first, of his soul to grace.

° Acts ii.

The life of a believer is derived and flows forth from Christ as his head, and is mystically one life with his, and therefore so, as himself expresseth it, *because I live, ye shall live also.* Therefore is he called the *first begotten from the dead, and the beginning*, Ἐν πᾶσιν πρωτεύων[q]. He is first in all, and from him spring all these streams that *make glad the city of God.* Therefore the Apostle, in his thanksgiving for our new life and lively hopes, leaves not out that, *Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;* that is the conduit of all. And he expresses it in the same place, that *We are begotten again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.* But, alas! we prejudge ourselves of all that rich comfort that is wrapt up in this, by living to ourselves and our lusts, and to the world, having not our consciences purified from dead works. How few of us are there that set that ambition of *Paul* before us, *desiring above all things to know him, and the power of his resurrection. To be made conformable,* that is the knowledge, as he there expresses it, a lively experienced knowledge of that power.

2. This, rightly considered, will answer all our doubts and fears in the church's hardest times; when in its deliverance there appears nothing but impossibilities; so low that its enemies are persuaded to conclude, that it shall never rise again, and its friends are opprest with fearing so much: yet he that brought up his own Son Jesus from the dead, can and will restore his church, for which he gave his only begotten Son to the death. *Son of man,* says he, *can these dry bones live?* (thus often looks the church's deliverance, which is there the proper sense). The prophet answered most wisely, *Lord, thou knowest,* "It is a work only for thee to know and to do;" and by his Spirit they were revived. And as here it looked hopeless, as the disciples thought, they were at giving it over, and blaming

[q] Col. i. 15.

almost their former credulity, *We thought this should have been he that should have delivered* Israel; *and besides all this to-day is the third day.* True the third day was come, but it was not yet ended; yea, he rose in the beginning of it, though they yet knew it not, nor him present to whom they spake: but toward the end of it, they likewise knew that he was risen, when he was pleased to discover himself to them. Thus, though the enemies of the church prevail so far against it, that it seems buried, and a stone laid to the grave's mouth, yet it shall rise again, and at the very fittest, the appointed time, as Christ the third day. Thus the church expresses her confidence[r], *In the third day he will raise us up.* Whatsover it suffers, it shall gain by it, and be more beautiful and glorions in its restorement*.

He ascended into heaven.] He rose again, not to remain on earth as before, but to return to his throne of majesty, from whence his love drew him, according to his prayer[s], which was a certain prediction of it. He had now accomplished the great work he came for, and was therefore by the covenant and transaction betwixt his Father and him, to be exalted to his former glory; the same person that before, but with the surcease of another nature, which he had not before, and of a new relative dignity, being to sit as king of his church, which he had purchased with his blood.

And to express this, it is added, that *he sits at the right hand of God*[t]. By which, according to its allusive sense, is exprest, not only his matchless glory, but his dominion and rule as prince of peace, the alone king of his church, her supreme lawgiver and mighty protector, and conqueror of all his enemies, ruling his holy hill of *Zion* with the golden sceptre of his word, and breaking his enemies the strongest of them in pieces, with the *iron rod* of his

[r] Hos. vi. 1, 2.
[s] John xvii.
*. Mergas profundo, pulchrior exilit.
[t] Psm. cx. 1. &c. Ephes. i. 20, 21, &c.

justice, as we have it in the second *Psalm.* They attempt in vain to unsettle his throne, it is very far out of their reach, as high as the right hand of God; *For ever, O God, thy throne is established in heaven.* What way is there for the worms of this earth to do any thing against it?

As in these is the glory of Christ, so they contain much comfort of a Christian. In that very elevation of our nature to such dignity, is indeed, as the ancients speak, *mira dignatio,* that our flesh is exalted above all the glorious spirits, the angels; and they adore the nature of man, in the person of man's glorified Saviour, the Son of God. This exaltation of Jesus Christ doth so reflect a dignity on the nature of mankind; but the right and possession of it is not universal, but is contracted and appropriate to them that believe on him. *He took not on him the nature of angels,* says the apostle, but *the nature of the seed of* Abraham. He says, not the nature of man, though it is so, but of the seed of *Abraham;* not so much because of his descent from that particular stock after the flesh, as in the spiritual sense of *Abraham's* seed, as it is at large cleared [u]. The rest of mankind forfeits all that dignity and benefit that arises to their nature in Christ, by their distance and disunion from him through unbelief. But the believer hath not only naturally one kind of being with the humanity of Christ, but is mystically one with the person of Christ, with whole Christ, God-man, and by virtue of that mysterious union, they that partake of it, partake of the very present happiness and glory of Christ, they have a real interest in whatsoever he is and hath, in all his dignities and power; and in that sense they that are justified are glorified, in that Christ is exalted, they are so too in him. Where a part, and the chief part of themselves is, and is in honour, there they may account themselves to be *. A man is said to be crowned when the crown is set

[u] Rom. ix. * Ubi portio mea regnat, ibi me regnare credo.

upon his head, now our head Christ is already crowned.

In sum, believers have in this ascending and enthroning of Christ, unspeakable comfort through their interest in Christ, both in consideration of his present affection to them, and his effectual intercession for them; and in the assured hope this gives them of their own after happiness and glory with him.

1. In all his glory he forgets them not, he puts not off his bowels with his low condition here, but hath carried it along to his throne; his majesty and love suit very well, and both in their highest degree*; as all the waters of his sufferings did not quench his love. Nor left he it behind him buried in the grave, but it arose with him being stronger than death; so he let it not fall to the earth when he ascended on high, but it ascended with him, and he still retains it in his glory. And that our flesh, which he assumed on earth, he took up into heaven, as a token of indissoluble love, betwixt him and those whom he redeemed, and sends down from thence as the rich token of his love, his spirit into their hearts; so that these are mutual remembrances. Can he forget his own on earth, having their flesh so closely united to him? You see he does not, he feels what they suffer, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* And can they forget him whose Spirit dwells in them, and records lively to their hearts the passages of his love, and brings all those things to their remembrance (as himself tells us, that Spirit would do) and so indeed proves the comforter by representing unto us that his love, the spring of our comforts? And when we send up our requests, we know of a friend before us there, a most true and a most faithful friend that fails not to speak for us, what we say and much more; *he liveth*, says the Apostle, *to make intercession for us.* This is the ground of a Christian's boldness at the throne of grace: yea

* Bene conveniunt, & in una sede morantur, majestas & amor.

therefore is the Father's throne the throne of grace to us, because the throne of our Mediator Jesus Christ is beside it: he sits at his right hand, otherwise it could be nothing to us but a throne of justice, and so in regard of our guiltiness, a throne of terror and affrightment, which we would rather fly from, than draw near unto.

Lastly, as we have the comfort of such a friend, to prepare access to our prayers there, that are the messengers of our souls; so of this, that our souls themselves when they remove from these houses of clay, shall find admission there through him. And this he tells his disciples again and again, and in them all his own, that their interest was so much in his ascending to his glory, *I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also.*

It will not be hard to persuade them that believe these things, and are portioners in them, to set their hearts on them, and for that end to take them off from all other things as unworthy of them, yea, it will be impossible for them to live without the frequent and sweet thoughts of that place where their Lord Jesus is. Yet it is often needful to remember them, that this cannot be enough done, and by representing these things to them, to draw them more upwards; and it is best done in the Apostle's words, *If ye be risen with Christ, mind those things that are above, where he sits,* &c. If ye be risen with him, follow him on, let your hearts be where he is; they that are one with him, the blessed seed of the woman, do find that unity drawing them heaven-wards: But, alas! the most of us are liker the accursed seed of the serpent, basely grovelling on this earth, and licking the dust; the conversation of the believer is in heaven, where he hath a Saviour, and from whence he looks for him. Truly there is little of a true Christian here, (and that argues that there is little of the truth of Christianity among us, who are altogether here) his head in heaven, and his heart there, and these are the two prin-

ciples of life. Let us then suit the Apostle's advice and so enjoy the comfort he subjoins, that by our affections above, we may know, *That our life is hid with Christ in God, and therefore that when he, who is our life, shall appear, we likewise shall appear with him in glory.*

From thence he shall come to judge, &c.] We have in this to consider, 1. That there is an universal judgment. 2. That Christ is the judge. 3. Something to be added of the quality of the judgment; all the three we have together[x].

That it is, we know to be the frequent doctrine of the scriptures, and hath been ever the belief of the godly from the beginning, as we may perceive by that ancient prophecy of *Enoch,* recorded by St. *Jude,* and we are so to believe it as a divine truth: and yet there is so much just reason for it, that natural men by the few sparkles of light in their consciences, have had some dark notions and conjectures of it, as is evident in *Plato* and the *Platonics,* and not only the philosophers but the poets: it may be too, that they have been helped by some scattered glimmerings of light concerning this, borrowed from the Jews, and traditionally past from hand to hand among the heathen, and therefore disguised and altered after their fashion.

If we be persuaded that there is a supreme ruler of the world, who is most wise, and just, and good, this will persuade us not only that there is some other estate and being, than that we see here, appointed for man, the most excellent, the reasonable part of this visible world; but that there shall be a solemn judicial proceeding, in entering and stating him in that after being. The many miseries of this present life, and that the best of men are usually deepest sharers in them, though it hath a little staggered, not only wise heathens, but sometimes some of the prime saints of God, yet it hath never prevailed with any but brutal and debauched spirits, to conclude against divine providence, but rather to

[x] Acts xvii. 31.

resolve upon this, that of necessity there must be another kind of issue, a final catastrophe reducing all the present confusions into order, and making all odds even, as you say*. It is true that sometimes here the Lord's right hand finds out his enemies, and is known by the judgment which he executes on them; and on the other side, gives some instances of his gracious providence to his church, and to particular godly men even before the sons of men: but these are but some few preludes and pledges of that great judgment, some he gives, that we forget not his justice and goodness, but much is reserved, that we expect not all nor the most here but hereafter. And it is certainly most congruous that this be done, not only in each particular apart, but most conspicuously in all together, that the justice and mercy of God may not only be accomplished, but acknowledged and magnified, and that not only severally in the several persons of men and angels, but universally, jointly, and manifestly in the view of all, as upon one theatre, angels and men being at once, some of them the objects of that justice, others of mercy, but all of them spectators of both. Each ungodly man shall not only read, whether he will or no, the justice of God in himself, and his own condemnation, which most of them shall do before that time in their soul's particular judgment: but they shall then see the same justice in all the rest of the condemned world, and the rest in them, and to the great increase of their anguish, they shall see likewise the glory of that mercy, that shall then shine so bright in all the elect of God, from which they themselves are justly shut out, and delivered up to eternal misery.

And on the other side, the godly shall with unspeakable joy behold not only a part as before, but the whole sphere both of the justice and mercy of their God, and shall with one voice admire and applaud him in both. 2. Besides, the process of many

* Cum res hominum tantâ caligine volvi. CLAUD.

mens' actions cannot be full at the end of their life, as it shall be at that day; many have very large after-reckonings to come upon them for those sins of others to which they are accessory, though committed after their death, as the sins of ill-educated children to be laid to the charge of their parents, the sins of such as any have corrupted, either by their counsels, or opinions, or evil examples, &c.

2. *He*, the Lord Jesus shall be judge in that great day, the Father, and Spirit, and his authority are all one, for they are all one God and one judge; but it shall be particularly exercised and pronounced by our Saviour God-man, *Jesus Christ*. That eternal *word* by whom all things were made, by him all shall be judged, and so he shall be the word in that last act of time, as in the first; he shall judicially pronounce that great and final sentence, that shall stand unalterable in eternity: and not only as the eternal Son of God, but withal the son of man, and so sit as king, and invested with all power in heaven and earth. *By that man whom he hath appointed to judge the quick and the dead*[y]. *This same Jesus shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.* The powers of the world and of hell are combined against his throne, therefore they shall be his footstool sitting on that throne, and the crown which he hath purchased for believers, he shall set it on their heads with his own hand. This shall be exceeding joy and comfort to all that have believed on him, that their Redeemer shall be their judge, he that was judged for them, shall judge them and pass sentence according to that covenant of grace that holds in him, pronouncing them free from the wrath which he himself endured for them, and heirs of that life that he bought with his dearest blood.

And that gives no less accession to the misery of the wicked, that the same Jesus whom they opposed and despised, so many of them as heard any thing of him, he shall sit upon their final judgment, and pro-

[y] Acts xvii, 31. and Acts i. 11.

nounce sentence against them, not partially avenging his own quarrel on them, no word of that, but most justly returning them the reward of their ungodliness and unbelief; that great shepherd shall thus make that great separation of his sheep from the goats.

3. Of the manner we have thus much here, that he shall come from heaven, as the scriptures teach us[z], he shall visibly appear in the air, he shall come *in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*, attended with innumerable companies of glorious angels that shall serve him, both in the congregating his elect, and separating them from the reprobate; but himself in the brightness of his own majesty, infinitely surpassing them all[a]. His first coming was mean and obscure, suiting his errand, for then he came to be judged; but that last coming shall be glorious, for he comes to judge, and his judgment shall be in righteousness[b]. * There shall be no misalledging, or mis-proving, or mis-judging there; all the judgments of men, whether private or judicial, shall be rejudged there according to truth, such a judge before whom all things are naked; and not only shall he know and judge all aright, but all they that are judged, shall themselves be convinced that it is so; then all will see that none are condemned but most deservedly, and that the Lord's justice is pure and spotless in them that perish, as his grace, without prejudice to his justice, it being satisfied in Christ for them that are saved. The books shall be opened, those that men so willingly, the most of them, keep shut and claspt up, and are so unwilling to look into, their own accusing consciences: the Lord will proceed formally against the wicked according to the books; no wrong shall be done them, they shall have fair justice, and they shall see what they would not look upon before; when by seeing, that might have been blotted out, and a free ac-

[z] Matt. xxiv. 30. [a] 2 Thess. i. 7. [b] Acts xvii. 31.

* Juste judicabit qui injuste judicatus est. Aug.

quittance written in its stead. And that the believer shall read in his conscience at that day, which through the dimness of faith and dark troubled estate of his soul, he many times could not read here below.

We are gaping still after new notions, but a few things wisely and practically known, drawn down from the head into the heart, are better than all that variety of knowing that men are so taken up with; *Paucis literis opus est ad mentem bonam.* This and such like common truths we think we both know and believe well enough; but truly if this great point, touching the great and last judgment, were indeed known and believed by us, it would draw our minds to more frequent and more deep thoughts of it; and were we often and serious in those thoughts, they would have such influence into all our other thoughts, and the whole course of our lives, as would much alter the frame of them from what they are. Did we think of this gospel which we preach and hear, that we must then be judged by it, we would be now more ruled by it; but the truth is, we are willingly forgetful of these things, they are melancholy pensive thoughts, and we are content that the noise of affairs or any vanities fill the ear of our minds, that we hear them not. If we be forced at some times to hear of this last judgment to come, it possibly casts our conscience into some little trembling fit for the time, as it did *Felix;* but he was not, nor are we so happy, as to be shaken out of the custom and love of sin by it: we promise it fair, as he did, some other time; but if that time never come, this day will come, and they that shun to hear or think of it, shall then see it, and the sight of it will be as terrible and amazing, as the timely thoughts of it would have been profitable. It is no doubt an unpleasing subject to all ungodly earthly minds, but sure it were our wisdom to be of that mind now, that then we shall be forced to be of; we shall then read by the light of that fire

that shall burn the world, the vanity of all those things whereon we now doat so foolishly. Let us therefore be persuaded to think so now, and disengage our hearts, and fix them on him who shall then judge us, *Kiss the Son,* &c. They are only happy that trust in him; that which is the affrightment of others, is their great joy and desire; they love and long for that day, both for their Saviour's glory in it, and their own full happiness, and that their love to his appearing, is to them a certain pledge of the crown they are to receive at his appearing[c], *at that day,* says the Apostle; this day he esteems more of than all his days, therefore he names it no otherwise than *that day:* How may we know what day it was he meant? His coronation-day. But of all men, sure the hypocrite likes least the mention and remembrance of that day; there is no room for disguises there, all masks must off, and all things appear just as they are, and that is the worst news to him that can be.

I believe in the Holy Ghost.] God is both a Spirit and holy; but this name, personally taken, is peculiarly that of the third person, proceeding from the Father and the Son, by a way that can neither be expressed nor conceived; holy in himself, and the author and cause of all holiness in us.

It is neither useful nor safe for us to entangle our thoughts in disputes concerning this mystery, but it is necessary that we know, and acknowledge, and believe in this *holy Spirit*; it is he in whom and by whom we believe: we cannot know God, nor the things of God, but by the Spirit of God[d], nor say that Jesus is God, but by the same Spirit[e]. We know that this Holy Trinity co-operates in the work of our salvation; the Father hath given us his Son, and the Son hath sent us his Spirit, and the Spirit gives us faith, which unites us to the Son, and through him to the Father: the Father ordained our redemption, the Son wrought it, the Holy Spirit reveals and applies it.

[c] 2 Tim. iv. 8. [d] 1 Cor. ii. 11. [e] 1 Cor. xii. 3.

The remaining articles have the fruit of that great work, the sending of the Son of God in the flesh, his suffering, and dying, &c. what it is, and to whom it belongs; the result of Christ's incarnation and death, *cui & cujus gratiâ.* Yea, the great design of God in the other great work, that of the first creation, was this second; he made the world, that out of it he might make this *elect world*, that is called his *church:* the Son fell on sleep, on a dead sleep, indeed the sleep of death on the cross, that out of his side might be framed his spouse, which is his church. The Holy Spirit moving upon the souls of men in their conversion, aims at this same end, the gathering and compleating of his church; he is the breath of life that breathed on these new creatures that make up this society. So then, this is as much as to say, I verily believe that God had such a purpose in making the world, and in sending his Son into it, and they both in sending the Spirit, and the Spirit in his working to make a holy church, a number that should serve God here, and enjoy him in eternity; and I believe that God cannot fall short of his end, that blessed Trinity doth not project and work in vain: I believe therefore there is such a company, there is a *holy universal church;* (universal) diffused through the several ages, and places, and nations of the world; (holy) washed in the blood of Christ, and sanctified by his Spirit; that it is, that it hath in all ages continued from the beginning, and shall continue to the end of the world, increasing still and growing to its appointed perfection, amidst all the enmities and oppositions that it encounters in the world. *I send you forth,* says Christ, *as sheep among wolves.* The preservation of the church is a continuing miracle, it resembles *Daniel's* safety among the hungry lions, but prolonged from one age to another. The ship, wherein Christ is, may be weather-beaten, but it shall not perish. So then, you see that this confession is altogether no other but your acknowledgment of God in himself, Three in One, and One

in Three, and his works of the creation of the world, and redemption of man by his Son, made man for that purpose, and appropriate to them for whom it was designed by his Holy Spirit: and with this acknowledgment, our reliance on this God as the author of our being and well-being.

The communion of saints.] This springs immediately from the former: if they make one church, then they have a very near communion together; they are one body united to that glorious head that is above; they have all one spiritual life flowing from him; and this communion holds not only on earth and in heaven apart, but even betwixt heaven and earth; the saints on earth make up the same body with those already in glory; they are born to the same inheritance by new birth, though the others are entered in possession before them. This their common title to spiritual blessings, and eternal blessedness, prejudges none of them; their inheritance is such as is not lessened by the multitude of heirs, it is entire to each one, and that grace and salvation that flows from Christ, *the Sun of Righteousness*, is as the light of the sun where it shines, none hath the less because of others partaking of it. The happiness of the saints is called *an inheritance in light*, which all may enjoy without abatement to any: they have each one their crown; they need not, they do not envy one another, nor *Ottoman*-like, one brother to kill another to reign alone; yea, they rejoice in the happiness and salvation of one another, they are glad at the graces that God bestows on their brethren, for they know that they all belong to the same first owner, and return to his glory; and that whatsoever diversity is in them, they all agree and concenter in that service and good of the church; and so what each one hath of gifts and graces belongs to all by virtue of this communion. Thus ought each of them to think, and every one of them humbly and charitably so to use what he hath himself, and ingenuously to rejoice in that which others have, as the Apostle reasons at large[f].

[f] 1 Cor. xii.

I believe a holy Catholic church, and the communion of saints.]

We may see the worth and the necessity of holiness, how much it is regarded in the whole work; for this very thing did Christ give himself for his church, *that he might sanctify it*, &c.[g], so the end of our redemption: and if we look as far forward as salvation, there perfect holiness; nothing unclean shall enter that holy city, and *without holiness no man shall see God:* And look again as far back as our election[h], and these that are not partakers of this, do but delude themselves, in dreaming of interest in the rest: no washing in the blood of Christ to remission, but withal *by the Spirit to sanctification;* no comfort to the unholy in their resurrection, because no hope of that to follow on it, that follows here, eternal life: no, without shall be dogs. In the base and foolish opinion of the world, holiness is a reproach, or at the best but a mean poor commendation, as you speak of it disdainfully, a *good, silly, holy body;* and men are more pleased with any other title: they had a great deal rather be called learned, or wise, or stout, or comely, than holy *. But God esteems otherwise of it, whose esteem is the true rule of worth. That forecited place, *a glorious church:* How? *Holy and without blemish*; that is indeed the true beauty of the soul, makes it like God, and that is its comeliness. We see the Lord himself delights to be known much by this stile, and glorified by it, *Holy, Holy, Holy,* so Exod. xv. *Glorious in holiness;* and the Spirit of God still called the *Holy Spirit.* How much then are they mistaken concerning heaven, that think to find the way to it out of the path of holiness, which is indeed *via regni*, the only way that leads unto it. Reprove you of unholiness, you say, you are not saints. No? So much the worse, for they that mean to share in the pardon of sin, and eternal life, must be such. If you be content still not to be saints, go on; but know,

[g] Ephes. v. 26. [h] Ephes i. 4.

* Malumus audire O virum doctum, quam O virum bonum. Sen.

that they that are not in some measure saints in grace here, shall never be saints in glory hereafter.

Forgiveness of sins.] Notwithstanding forgiveness of sins, there is a necessity of holiness, though not as meriting it, as leading unto happiness. But on the other side, notwithstanding the highest point of holiness we can attain, there is a necessity of this forgiveness of sins. Though believers make up a holy church and company of saints, yet there is a debt upon them that their holiness pays not; yea, they are so far from having a superplus for a standing treasure after all is paid, that all the holiness of the saints together, will not pay the least farthing of that debt they owe. *As for me, I will walk in mine integrity*, says *David*[h]. How then? adds he, "this shall justify me sufficiently," no, *but redeem thou me, and be merciful to me;* so 1 John 6, 7. *If we say, we have no sin, we are liars*, &c. *And walk in darkness*, &c. And yet in the next verse, though we do walk in the light, yet is there need of the *blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse us from all sin;* and so throughout the scriptures. All the integrity of the godly under the law did not exempt them from offering sacrifice, which was the expiation of sin in the figure, looking forward to that great and spotless sacrifice, that was to be slain for the sins of the world; and those that believe the gospel, the application of that justifying blood that streams forth in the doctrine of the gospel, is not only needful to wash in for their cleansing in their first conversion, but to be re-applied to the soul, for taking off the daily contracted guiltiness of new sins. It is a fountain opened and standing open for sin and for uncleanness, as that sea of brass before the sanctuary, &c. They that are clean have still need of washing, at least, their feet, as Christ speaks to *St. Peter*.

The consideration of that precious blood shed for our sins, is the strongest persuasive to holiness, and to the avoiding and hating of sin. So far is the doc-

[h] Psm. xxvi. 11.

trine of justification (right understood) from animating men to sin. But because of the woeful continuance of sin in the godly, while they continue in this region of sin and death, therefore is there a continual necessity of new recourse to this great expiation. Thus *St. John* joins these two[1].

You think it an easy matter, and a thing that for your own ease you willingly believe, the forgiveness of sins. It is easy indeed, after our fashion, easy to imagine that we believe such a thing when we hear it, because we let it pass and question it not, we think it may be true, and think no farther on it, while we neither know truly what sin is, nor feel the weight of our own sins: but where a soul is convinced of the nature of sin, and its own guiltiness, there to believe forgiveness, is not so easy a task.

In believing this forgiveness of sins, and so the other privileges that attend it, there be these three things gradually leading one to the other. 1. To believe that there is such a thing, and that it is purchased by the death of Christ, and so attainable by coming unto him for it. 2. By this the soul finding itself ready to sink under the burden of its own sins, is persuaded to go to him, and lay over that load on him, and itself withal resolves to rest on him for this forgiveness, this is to believe in him *who is the Lord our righteousness.* 3. Upon this believing on him for forgiveness, follows a reflex believing of that forgiveness; not continually and inseparably, especially if we take the degree of assurance somewhat high, but yet in itself it is apt to follow, and often in God's gracious dispensation doth follow upon that former act of believing, through the clearness and strength of faith in the soul, and sometimes withal, is backed with an express peculiar testimony of God's own Spirit: to believe and to grow stronger in believing, and to aspire to the assurance of faith is our constant duty; but that immediate testimony of the Spirit is an arbitrary beam that God re-

[1] 1 John ii. 1, 2.

serves in his own hand, yet such a gift as we may not only lawfully seek, but do foolishly prejudge ourselves and slight it, if we neglect to seek it, and want so rich a blessing for want of asking, and withal, labouring to keep our hearts in a due dispose and frame for entertaining it. The keeping our consciences pure, as much as may be, doth not only keep the comfortable evidence of pardon clearest and least interrupted within us, but is the likeliest to receive those pure joys, that flow immediately into the soul from the Spirit of God. The testimony of our conscience is (if we damp it not ourselves) our continual feast, but that testimony of the Spirit is a superadded taste of higher comfort out of God's own hand, as it were a piece of heaven in the soul, which he sometimes chears it withal: where he hath first given much love and ardent desires after himself, they are short of that light, in the fulness whereof we hope to dwell hereafter. But besides that, God is most free in that particular, and knows what is fittest for us; the greatest part even of true Christians yet do not so walk, nor attend to that spiritualness that is capable of such visits.

The resurrection of the body.] The comfort of these privileges, opposed to those grand evils that we feel or fear, sanctification to the power of sin, justification or forgiveness to the guilt of sin, the resurrection to temporal death, and life eternal to the second or eternal death.

This is the raising of the self-same body that is laid in the dust, otherwise, the giving of a body to the soul again, must have some other name, for *resurrection* it cannot be called.

That God can do this, notwithstanding all imaginable difficulties in it, have we not proof enough in what he hath done; sure that which he did in the beginning of time, the framing the whole world of nothing, is more than a sufficient pledge of this that is to be done in the end of time.

That he will do it, we have his own word for it,

and the pledge of it in raising his Son Jesus, therefore called *the first begotten from the dead;* this as relating to believers who are one with him. The resurrection of the dead in general is an act of power, but to the godly an act of grace, to the wicked of justice: both shall rise by the power of Christ, but to the one as a judge, and a judge that shall condemn them; to the other as their head, and their Saviour. *Joseph's* two fellow prisoners were both taken out of the prison, and at the same time, but the one to the court, the other to the gallows; so in the resurrection[k].

The confession of faith being of such things as belong to believers, and are their happiness, therefore their resurrection is particularly here intended, as we see eternal life and glory is subjoined to it.

Our bodies are raised that were companions and partakers of our good and evil in our abode upon earth, that they may in eternity be companions and partakers of our reward: those of the ungodly to suit their condemned souls, shall be filled with shame, and vileness, and misery; and those that were in their lower estate here temples of the Holy Ghost, shall be filled with that fulness of joy, that shall run over from the soul unto them; they shall be conform to the happy and glorious souls to which they shall be united, yea to the glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ. There shall then be nothing but beauty, and glory, and immortality in them that are now frail and mortal, and being dead, do putrify and turn to dust. He shall change our vile bodies, and make them like unto his most glorious body; but as *St. Bernard* says well, *If we would be sure of this, that our bodies shall be conform to his, in the glory to come, see our souls be here conform to his, in that humility which he so much manifested whilst he dwelt among men;* if we would that then our vile body be made like his glorious body, let our proud heart now be made like his humble heart.

Life eternal.] Our confession of faith ends in that

[k] John v. 29.

which is the end of our faith, our everlasting salvation, or eternal life; of which, all that we can say is but stammering, and all our knowledge and conceiting of it but ignorance, in regard of what it is; yet so much we know, or may know of it, as, if we knew aright, would certainly draw us more into the desires and pursuit of it. The very name of life is sweet, but then especially as it is here meant, in the purest and sweetest sense, for a truly happy life*. For a life full of misery is scarce worth the name of life, and the longer it were, the worse; therefore the miserable estate of damned souls, though immortal in it, is called death. So then by this *life*, true and full blessedness being meant, and then that added, that it is *eternal* life, what can be imagined more to make it desirable.

So happy, that there shall not be the smallest drop of any evil or bitterness in it, pure unmixt bliss, nothing present in it that is displeasing, nor nothing wanting that is delightful; and everlasting, that when millions of years (if there were any such reckoning there) are rolled about, it shall be as far from ending as at the first.

A very little knowledge of this blessed life, would make us clean out of love with the life, that now we make such account of: What can it be that ties us here? The known shortness of this life, were it more happy than it is to any, might make it of less esteem with us; but then withal, being so full of miseries and sins, so stuffed with sorrows round about us, and within ourselves; that if the longest of it can be called long, it is only the multitude of miseries in it, can challenge that name for it. Such a world of bodily diseases, here one's head paining him, another his stomach†, some complaining of this part, some of that, and the same party sometimes of one malady, sometimes of another; what disappointments and dis-

* Non est vivere, sed valere, vita.

† Quam malè nobis convenit, nunc de ventre, nunc de capite, &c. hoc contingere solet in alieno habitantibus. Sen.

graces, and cross encounters of affairs; what personal and what public calamities, and then sin the worst of all; and yet all cannot wean us. We cannot endure to hear nor think of removing; and the true reason is, unbelief of this eternal life, and the neglect of those ways that lead to it. Be persuaded at length to call in your heart from the foolish chace of vanity, and consider this glorious life that is set before you. Do you think the provision you make for this wretched present life worth so many hours daily pains, and give eternal life scarce half a thought in many hours, possibly not a fixed serious thought in many days? sure if you believe there is such a thing, you cannot but be convinced, that it is a most preposterous unwise course you take, in the expence of your time and pains upon any thing else more than on life eternal. Think what a sad thing it will be, when your soul must remove out of that little cottage wherein it now dwells, not to be bettered by the removal, but thrust out into utter darkness; whereas, if ye would give up with sin, and embrace Jesus Christ as your joy and your life, in him you would presently be put into a sure unfailing right to this eternal life; it is a pure life, and purity of life here, is the only way to it. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE

LORD's PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 9.

After this manner therefore pray ye.

THE malice and slight of satan, in reference to good actions, works first in attempting wholly to divert us from them; but if that take not, the next is, to pervert their use, and corrupt them so in doing, that they lose their acceptance with God, and we consequently lose the fruit and comfort of them. And as there is no religious exercise that he hath more quarrel at, and owes greater enmity to, than prayer, being the most constant crosser of his designs, there is none from which he more endeavours to estrange men, either wholly to lay it down, or to frequent cessations; or if that cannot be, but that the light of conscience still calls for somewhat at least that may pass with a man for prayer, yet if satan can get it turned to hypocrisy and formality, he knows he needs not fear it, for so it wants the life of prayer, and remains nothing but a dead carcase, and therefore can neither please the living God, nor hurt him who is its enemy.

Therefore our Saviour here warns his disciples to avoid, in praying, these two evils, *the vain ostentation of hypocrites*[a], and *the vain repetition of the Heathen*[b], not to think it prayer to tumble out a multitude of

[a] Verse 5. [b] Verse 7.

empty words; and upon that takes occasion to set this matchless copy of prayer, the way of example being the shortest and liveliest way of teaching. These words that are but the entry, are not to be past; there is in them, 1. The duty of prayer supposed. 2. The prescribing of this form. 1. *Pray.* 2. *After this manner.*

The use and necessity of prayer is taken for confest, as before[c], *When ye pray*, and *when thou prayest.* And the consideration of this exercise, and of this pattern of it, is with good reason accounted among the most necessary principles of religion; without it indeed all religion withers and languishes. The law of God is so pure and exact a rule, that we cannot come near the perfection of it, and therefore fall under its curse. When we understand it so, that drives us to the gospel, to seek salvation there; and the articles of the gospel, of our Christian faith, are so high and mysterious, that nature cannot aright understand or believe them; and therefore both law and gospel drive us to prayer, to seek of God renewing grace to conform our hearts in some measure to the holy law of God, and faith to lay hold on Jesus Christ, and salvation in him held forth to us in the gospel. Prayer is not taken in its strict grammatical sense, in which the words used for it signify only petition or request; but as comprehending together with petition, confession and thanksgiving, may be called briefly and plainly a *pious invocation of God;* and not speaking abstractly of prayer, but according to the estate of fallen man, it is very fit to add the express mention of the Mediator, that is an invocation of God in the name of Christ; for it never ascends to God as pleasing incense, but when it passeth through that golden censer, and is perfumed with the sweet odours of his merits and intercession. His entrance into heaven hath opened up the way for our prayers to come in, and there is no access to the throne of grace, but by *that new and living way*, as

[c] Chap. vi. 7.

the Apostle speaks. But how much better is the frequent practice than much discourse, and business in defining it; whatsoever is said aright in this, is for the other as its end, as *Gerson* hath it out of an ancient philosopher, *Inquirimus quid sit virtus, non ut sciamus, sed ut boni efficiamur. We enquire what virtues are, not to know them, but to have them:* and indeed to do otherwise is but answerable employment to study the nature of riches, and talk of them, and remain poor, possessing none.

It is not needful to stay upon distinguishing prayer, by the different matter of petitions, or things to be requested, which possibly some of the different names of prayer in scripture do signify. This may suffice, that it be of such things as are conform to the will and promises of God, and desired with a suitable disposition of mind, and therefore I call it *a pious invocation.* It is the highest impudence to present God with unjust or frivolous desires, & *quæ scire homines nolunt Deo narrant*, SEN. We ought to reverence the majesty of God, and regard that in our requests. There is a difference betwixt solemn prayer, and sudden ejaculations, but it is not a difference in their nature, but only in continuance; the former is here meant, therefore of it, &c. Only this of the other, it is to be wished that it were more known, and more in use with Christians, for it is (no doubt) a very happy means of preserving the heart in holy temper, and constant regard of God in all a man's actions, and is a main point of answering the apostle's word, *pray continually;* when in company, and apart a man useth secret short motions of the soul to God, that may be very frequent in the day, and night, whereas men's callings, and natural necessities, and employments allow them but some certain parcel of both for solemn prayer; and these frequent looks of the heart to heaven exceedingly sweeten and sanctify our other employments, and diffuse somewhat of heaven through all our actions. Solemn prayer at fit times is a visiting of God, but this were a constant walking with

him all the day long, lodging with him in the night, *When I awake*, says *David*, *I am still with thee.* And these sudden dartings of the soul heavenwards, may sometimes have more swiftness and force than larger supplications, having much spirit, as it were, contracted into them; and they would no doubt, if used, be answered with frequent beams of God's countenance returned to the soul, as it were in exchange; for though whole lifetimes of prayer are not worthy the least of those, yet it pleases God thus to keep intercourse with these souls that love him, and for the ejaculations of their desires to him, looks back on them, and so they interchange as it were sudden glances of love that answer one another. The Lord is pleased to speak thus himself, and the souls that know this love, understand it, *Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, with one of thine eyes.* But though such looks in ejaculation will refresh a soul inflamed with the love of God, yet it suffices not, they must have times of larger and more secret converse with their beloved, and particularly in the exercise of solemn continued prayer, and if cut short of it at any time, will miss it as much, as an healthful body its accustomed repast.

But it would seem, that though there may be some reason for confession and thanksgiving, yet that which hath most peculiarly the name of prayer, petition, is superfluous: He that knows our wants better than ourselves, and what is fittest to bestow upon us, and forgets not at all, what need we put him in mind, and follow him with so many suits?

This indeed is a strong reason against vain babblings in prayer, and imagining to be heard merely for long continuance, and multitude of words; and our Saviour himself doth here use it so[d], but withal he shews us clearly, that it makes nothing against the exercise of prayer, in that he adds immediately upon these words, *After this manner therefore pray ye.*

Although the Lord knows well our wants, and

[d] Verse 8.

doth according to his own good pleasure, yet there is for prayer, 1. *Duty.* 2. *Dignity.* 3. *Utility.*

1. *Duty.* We owe this homage to God, not only to worship him, but particularly to offer up our supplications, and to acknowledge him our king, and ruler of the whole world, and to testify our dependence upon him, as the giver of every good gift; it is not because he is unwilling, and loath to give, *For he gives liberally, and upbraids none*, yet says the apostle there, *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it.* So of all wants, that which thanksgiving doth acknowledge after receipt, supplication doth beforehand; his power, and truth, and goodness, &c. this is his still, the God that *heareth prayer*, and therefore this homage is due to him, *To him shall all flesh come.*

2. *Dignity.* This is the honour of the saints, that they are admitted to so near and frequent converse with the great God, that they do not only expect from him, but may so freely speak to him of their desires and wants, and may pour out their complaints into his bosom. *Abraham* is sensible of the greatness of this privilege, by reflecting upon the greatness of his distance: It is an unspeakable honour for dust and ashes to be received into such familiarity with the Lord of heaven and earth.

3. *Utility.* It quiets and eases the heart when it is troubled to vent itself to God, as there is some natural ease in sighs and tears; (for otherwise nature should not have been furnished with them, nor teach us to use them;) they discharge some part of grief, though addressed no whither, but only let out, more when it is in the presence of some entire friend; so that they must be most of all easing, when they are directed to God in prayer*. *Mine eye poureth forth tears unto God*, says *Job;* and *David*, *My sighing is not hid from thee. Cast thy burden on the Lord*, says the Psalmist. The Lord calls for our burdens,

* Cor serenat & purgat oratio, capaciusque efficit ad excipienda divina munera. S. Aug.

would not have us wrestle with them ourselves, but roll them over on him. Now the desires that are breathed forth in prayer are, as it were, the very unloading of the heart; each request that goes forth, carries out somewhat of the burden with it, and lays it on God. *Be careful in nothing*, says the apostle: that were a pleasant life indeed, if it might be; but how shall that be attained? Why, this is the only way, says he, *In all things make your requests known unto God:* tell him what are your desires, and leave them there with him, and so you are sure to be rid of all further disquieting care of them; try as many ways as you will, there is no other will free you in difficulties of all perplexing thoughts but this, and this will do it.

2. In it the graces of the spirit are exercised, and they gain by that, as all habits do. They are strengthened and increased by acting faith, in believing the promises: and that is the very basis of prayer; it cannot subsist without the support of faith. And hope is raised up and set on tiptoe, ἀποκαραδοκίαν, to look out for accomplishment, and love it, is that which delights it, to impart its mind to him on whom it is set, and thus to entertain converse and conference with him: and all hours seem short to it that are thus spent; and by this it still rises to a higher flame, it is blown and stirred by prayer. The more the soul converses with God, doubtless the more it loves him.

And this speaking your desires to God in prayer, makes the heart still more holy, invites it to entertain new desires, but such as it may confidently acquaint God withal.

In relation to the particular things desired, it not only fits and disposes the heart for receiving them as blessings, but withal it is a real means of obtainment, by reason of God's own appointment, and of his promise. He hath bound himself by his promises, not to disregard the prayers of his people: *His ear is open to their cry*, says the Psalmist; and the many

instances in scripture, and experience of the church in all ages, bear witness to the truth of these promises. Imminent judgments averted, great armies conquered, and the very course of nature countermanded, the sun arrested, by the power of prayer. *Moses's* hands only held up to heaven, routed the *Amalekites* more than all the swords that were drawn against them*.

The goodness of God is exprest in his promises; and these promises encourage prayer, and prayer is answered with performance, and thanksgiving returns the performance in praise to God[c]. So all ends where it began, in him who is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and end of all things.

If you would be rich in all grace, be much in prayer. Conversing with God assimilates the soul to him, beautifies it with the beams of his holiness, as *Moses's* face shined when he returned from the mount. It is prayer that brings all our supplies from heaven, (as that woman, *Prov.* xxxi. 14.) draws more grace out of God's hand, and subdues sin and the powers of darkness; it entertains and augments our friendship with God, raiseth the soul from earth, and purifies it wonderfully. Their experience, that have any of this kind, teacheth them that as they abate in prayer, all their graces do sensibly weaken: therefore when the apostle hath suited a Christian with his whole armour, he adds this to all, *pray continually;* for this arms man and his armour both with the strength and protection of God, *armatura armaturæ oratio.*

After this manner.

They that know any thing of their own wants and poverty, and of the bounty and fulness of God, cannot doubt of the continual usefulness of prayer; and they that are sensible of their own unskilfulness, will acknowledge, that as prayer is necessary, so

* In *Aurelius* his time the legion of the Christians is called Κεραυνόβολος.

[c] Psal. l. 15.

there is necessity of a direction how to perform it. The disciples found this in themselves, when they said, *Lord teach us to pray*, as *St. Luke* hath it, where he records this prayer. And our Saviour here marks the errors of hypocrisy and babbling in prayer that are so incident to men, and teacheth his disciples, *After this manner therefore pray ye.*

As for prescribing forms of prayer in general, to be bound to their continual use in private or public, is no where practised. Nor is there, I conceive, on the other side, any thing in the word of God, or any solid reason drawn from the word, to condemn their use.

There is indeed that inconvenience observable in their much use, and leaning on them, that they easily turn to coldness and formality; and yet, to speak the truth of this, it is rather imputable to our dulness, and want of affection in spiritual things, than to the forms of prayer that are used. For whereas some may account it much spiritualness to despise what they have heard before, and to desire continual variety in prayer, it seems rather to be want of spiritualness that makes that needful, for that we find not our affections lively in that holy exercise, unless they be awaked and stirred by new expressions: whereas the soul that is earnest on the thing itself for itself, panting after the grace of God, and the pardon of sin, regards not in what terms it be uttered, whether new or old; yea, though it be in those words it hath heard and uttered a hundred times, yet still it is new to a spiritual mind. And sure the desires that do move in that constant way, have more evidence of sincerity and true vigour in them, than those that depend upon new notions and words to move them, and cannot stir without them. It may be it is no other but a false flash of temporary devotion that arises in a man's heart, which comes by the power of some moving strain of prayer that is new. But when confessions of sin, and requests of pardon, though in never so low and accustomed

terms, carry his heart along with them heavenwards, it is then more sure that the Spirit of God dwelling in him, and the sense of the things themselves, the esteem of the blood of Christ, and the favour of God, do move the heart, when there is no novelty of words to help it. So then, though the Lord bestows rich gifts upon some of his servants, for his glory and the good of his church; yet we should beware, that in fancying continual variety in prayer, there be not more of the flesh than of the spirit, and the head working more than the heart. It is remarkable that (as they that search those things observe) the words of this prayer are divers of them such, as come near the words of such petitions as were usual among the *Jews*, though he, in whom was all fulness and wisdom, was not scarce of matter and words; so little was novelty and variety considerable in prayer in his esteem. Mistake it not, the spirit of prayer hath not his seat in the invention, but in the affection. In this many deceive themselves, in that they think the work of this spirit of prayer to be mainly in furnishing new supplies of thoughts and words; no, it is mainly in exciting the heart anew at times of prayer, to break forth itself in ardent desires to God, whatsoever the words be, whether new or old, yea possibly without words; and then most powerful when it words it least, but vents in sighs and groans that cannot be exprest. Our Lord understands the language of these perfectly, and likes it best; he knows and approves the meaning of his own Spirit, looks not to the outward appearance, the shell of words, as men do.

But to speak particularly of this form that is above all exception; it is given us as the pattern and model of all our prayers, and the closer they keep to it, the nearer they resemble, they are the more approvable. It is a wonder then how any can scruple the use of this prayer itself: for if other prayers are to be squared by it, what forbids to use that which is the square, and therefore perfectest? If

they be good by conformity to it, itself must be better. The mumbling it over without understanding and affection, is indeed no other but a gross abuse of it, and taking of the name of God in vain, as all other lifeless prayer is. And this is not only the popish abuse of it, but too much our own; for when we do not both understand, and attentively mind what we say, it is all one to us, though in our own tongue, as if with them we said it in an unknown language. It is a foolish superstitious conceit, to imagine that the rattling over these words is sufficient for prayer; but it is, on the other side, a weak groundless scruple, to doubt that the use of it, with spiritual affection, is both lawful and commendable.

Οὕτως.] It is a particle both for the *matter* and *manner* of prayer.

1. *The matter.*

This may be our rule, that whatsoever we cannot reduce to some part of this prayer, as contained under it, should be no part of ours. If we take not heed to this, we may abuse the throne of God with undue and unworthy suits, and ask those things that it were a punishment to give us: therefore *Plato* chused well that word, *Give us what is good for us, whether we ask it or not; and what is evil give us not, though we should desire it.* Not to speak now particularly, we see in the matter of this prayer in general, that spiritual things are to be the main of all our prayers; and in things temporal, not to lodge superfluous inordinate desires, but in a moderate use to seek things necessary.

2. For the *manner*: Observe, 1. The order of this prayer, that the soul put itself in the sight of God, and him in its own sight, beginning as here with due thoughts of the majesty of God, to whom we pray; and this is of very great consequence: but more of this hearafter. 2. That the glory of God is wholly preferred to all our own contentment of what kind soever, that is to be the first born and strength of

all our desires, and all that we seek for ourselves must be in relation to that his glory, directed to it as our highest scope. And because we are naturally full of self-love, and our hearts are carried by it towards our own interest, and therefore will be ready to start aside like deceitful bows, and slip us in our aiming at that mark, therefore there be three several petitions, all of that strain, to make them steady and fixed towards it, to desire in all things, and above all things, that our God may be glorified.

3. *Brevity*, opposed to that babbling which our Saviour reproves and particularly corrects by this form; that fault he lays on the Heathen, not upon the *Jews*, for they blamed it too, and their doctors spake against it, alledging that place that is very pertinent[f], where he argues from our exceeding distance and the greatness of God, because men use not to entertain great persons with long empty discourses. Know then before whom thou art in prayer, and have so much respect to the majesty of God, as not to multiply idle repetitions, such as wise men cannot well endure, how much less the all-wise God. Βαττολογία and πολυλογία are here put as one, because the one is the consequent of the other; where there is much speaking, there will be vain speaking and empty repetitions*. *In multitude of words there wanteth not sin*, says *Solomon;* and we see it, that they that lay a necessity upon themselves of a long continuance and many words in prayer, as if it were otherwise no prayer at all, they fall into this inconvenience of idle repeating; and this is most unbeseeming our access to the majesty of God, as if there were some defect either in his knowledge, or in his attention, or affection to those that seek him. Therefore, though this was the common fault of the Heathen, yet some even of them had so much discerning as to condemn this folly, and inveigh against it†, acknow-

[f] Eccles. v. 2.

* Χωρὶς τὸ τ' εἶπειν πόλλα καὶ τὰ καιρία. SOPH.

† Paucis verbis rem divinam facito. PL.

ledging both the wisdom of God, and his love to mankind, and that he understands far better what is fit for us, than we ourselves, and therefore was not to be dishonoured with idle tediousness in prayer.

But is then all length and much continuance in prayer, and all redoubling of the same request reprovable? surely no. Were there nothing else to persuade us of this, our Saviour's own practice were sufficient, who prescribed this rule, and yet is found to have spent whole nights in prayer, and to have iterated the same request; and doubtless (which can be said of no other) his example is as perfect a rule as his doctrine.

This then briefly is the fault here, when the long continuance, and much repetition in prayer is affected as a thing of itself available, when heaping on words, and beating often over the same words, though the heart bear them not company, is judged to be prayer; and generally whensoever the tongue outruns the affection, then is prayer turned into babbling. Yea though a man use this very short form here prescribed, yet he may commit this very fault against which it was provided, he may babble in saying it; and it is to be feared the greatest part do so. Men judge (and that rightly) a speech to be long or short, not so much by the quantity of words, as by the sense; so that a very short speech that is empty of sense may be called long, and a long one that is full, and hath nothing impertinent, is truly short*: thus as men judge by the sense of speech, God judgeth by the affection of prayer, that is the true sense of it, so the quality is the rule of the quantity with him. There is no prayer too long to him, provided it be all enlivened with affection; no idle repetition where the heart says every word over again as often and more often than the tongue. Therefore those repetitions in the *Psalms; Lord*

* Absit ut multiloquium deputem, quando necessaria dicuntur, quantâlibet sermonum multitudine ac prolixitate dicantur. Brevitas est etiam in longissimâ oratione, cui nihil inest alieni.

hear, Lord incline thine ear, Lord attend, &c. were not idle on this account; God's own Spirit did dictate them, there was not one of them empty, but came from the heart of the holy pen-men, full fraught with the vehemency of their affections. And it is reported of *St. Augustin*, that he prayed over for a whole night, *Noverim te, Domine, noverim me*: because his heart still followed the suit, all of it was prayer. So that in truth, where the matter is new, and the words still diverse, and very rich in sense, yet with God it may be idle multiplying of words, because the heart stays behind; and where the same words are repeated, that a man seems poor and mean in the gift of prayer to others, yet if it be not defect of affection, but abundance of it (as it may be) that moves often the same request, it is not empty, but full of that sense that the searcher of hearts alone can read. I had rather share with that *publican* in his own words, and say it often over, as if I had nothing else to say, *God be merciful to me a sinner*, saying it with such a heart, than the most excellent prayer where the outside is the better half.

So then this is the mistake of men, to think to make words pass for prayer with God, and to make up what is wanting inwardly, with multitude of words and long continuance; a foolish compensation, that will no way satisfy him that says, above all, *my Son, give me thy heart;* and no length nor words can supply the want of that with him. Yet many do thus, they give large measure of that which is altogether worth nothing; as the orator said of those that make a poor speech pass for something, with crying it out with a loud voice, *that they were like to those cripples that got a horseback to hide their halting.* It is thus here, and the church of *Rome* hath it for their common shift, they have shut out the heart out of this employment, where it hath most interest, by praying in an unknown tongue; and this defect they make up with long continuance, and

repetition of *pater-nosters*, with a devotion as cold and dead as the beads they drop. And so they with their breviaries, notwithstanding of their name, fall directly into this foolish heathenish vanity of idle length and repetitions.

Thus do we too, though we speak our own known language, when either in secret or in public we suffer our hearts to rove in prayer, and hear not ourselves what we are praying, how then can we expect that God should hear us?

If the affection can be brought to continue in it, prayer in secret cannot be too long: but let us not think it virtue enough that it is long, let it rather be brief with strong bent of mind, than long without it*; as a small body strong and full of spirits, is much better than the greatest bulk that is dull and spiritless. And when we pray in company, because men cannot know the temper of other men's hearts, usually a convenient medium betwixt extremes, *viz.* briefness and length, seems most suitable.

But, alas! how few be there that keep constant watch over their affections in prayer, and endeavour to keep the heart bent to it throughout? Oh! how much sin is committed by us this way that we observe not?

This is a great lesson, and requires still our diligence, even all our lifetime, to learn it better and better, how to pray.

We have here indeed a complete copy, but we cannot follow it; he that set it us must put his Spirit within us, to lead our hand and heart that we may follow it, as he here shews, how we should pray. We are not born with this art, *fimus oratores*, and I may add the other word, true of us, in regard of our vanity of mind, and the devices that arise in it, *nascimur poetæ. Omnis fictio cordis*, &c.[s] We

* Non est (ut quidam putant) orare in multiloquio, si diutius oretur, aliud est sermo multus aliud diuturnus affectus. Absit multa loquutio, sed non desit multa precatio. Aug.

s Gen. vi. 5. Eccles. vii. ult.

must have that spirit of his, the spirit of prayer, to teach us effectually, and make us learn this divine art of prayer, according to his rules. Although we are thus externally taught by our Saviour's doctrine, yet unless we be taught within by the Spirit, we are never the nearer, we know neither what to ask, nor how to ask; but that is a happy supply, and they may rejoice in it that have it, the Spirit of God *helping their infirmities, and making intercession for them:* How should they but speed in their suits with God, that have both his own Spirit interceding, by framing and inditing their petitions, and his own Son interceding at his right hand by his merits?

Our Father.]

He that follows me (says our Saviour) *shall not walk in darkness.* It is our safest in all our ways to be led by him, particularly in our access to the Father by prayer; he leads us in by his intercession, through him we have ἰσαγογὴν, *access,* or rather *adduction,* takes us by the hand to bring us to the throne of grace, gives us his Spirit to frame our minds, and teach us with what disposition to pray. Here he leads us, by putting words in our mouths, and furnishing us what to say.

1. The preface or compellation.
2. The petitions.
3. The conclusion.

1. By the preface we are in general taught this, (ere we consider particularly the words of it;) 1. To endeavour to have right thoughts and apprehensions of God, on whom we call. 2. At our entry or beginning to pray, to set ourselves before him, and him before our own sight, to have the eye of our mind set on that deity we worship. This would do much to the curing that common disease of our prayers, the wandering and roving of our minds; an evil that they cannot but be sensible of, and often bewail, that take any notice of their own inward carriage with God, that trace their own

hearts, and ask account of their behaviour in prayer*. Oh! light inconstant hearts! (may they say) as the *Latin* reads that[h], *Cor meum dereliquit me.* How many regard them not at all? But they that do find it their ordinary trick to give them the slip. And this is one great cause of our wanderings, that we do not, at our entrance to prayer, compose ourselves to due thoughts of God, and to set ourselves in his presence; this would do much to awe us, and balast our minds, that they tumble not to and fro, as is their custom. There be not many that do, but it would prove no doubt much help, would we task ourselves to this, never to open our mouths to God, till the eye of our soul were fixed upon him, and taken up with considering of his presence. But of this more when we come to these words, *Who art in heaven.*

Our Father which art in heaven.] *Our Father;* the mercy of God is in this, to beget in us the confidence of faith: in the other, *which art in heaven;* the majesty of God to work us to reverence: though there is somewhat in the word *Father* likewise to persuade reverence, and something in the other that confirms faith; but more of this hereafter; yet if we take that which appears most, and is predominant, the former mainly supports faith, and the latter begets humility.

The frame of it is extensive; not *My Father*, but *Our Father*, and so throughout; besides that it was a pattern both for public and private prayer, and so it was fittest to run in the larger and public stile. It doth no doubt (as all have taken it) teach the charitable extension of our prayers, where they are most private, to take in with our own the good of others, and when we are busiest and most particularly dealing for ourselves, yet not to shut out our brethren. Let the place and performance of secret prayer be as private as may be, but the strain and suits public, as well as personal. The most private

* Nihil est in nobis corde fugacius. Gaze. [h] Psm. xl.

prayer of the godly is a public good, and he loses nothing by that; for, besides that his particular is not hindered by taking in others, he hath this gain, that by the same reason he likewise hath a share in all the prayers of others. And this (though little considered by the most) is one point, and not a small one, but a very profitable and comfortable point of that article of our faith, *The communion of saints*, that every believer hath a share in all the prayers of all the rest; he is partner in every ship of that kind that sets to sea, and hath a portion of all their gainful voyages.

But he that in prayer minds none but himself, doubtless he is not right in minding himself; howsoever this he may be sure of, that in keeping out others from his prayers, he bars himself from the benefit of all others prayers likewise. *Si pro te solo oras, pro te solus oras. S. Ambr.* So that self-love itself may here plead for love to our brethren. Forget not the church of God, and to seek the good of *Zion;* it is not only your duty, but your benefit. Are you not all concerned in it? If indeed you be parts of that mystical body: and it hinders not at all, but rather advances your personal suits at God's hands, when he sees your love to your brethren, and desires for the church's good. Let not therefore any estate, no private perplexity or distress, nor very sorrow for sin, take you so up, as to be all for yourselves; let others, but especially the public condition of the church of God, find room with you. We find it thus with *David*, when he was lamenting his own case, *Psm.* li. and *Psm.* xxv. *ult.* and elsewhere; yet he forgets not the church, *In thy good pleasure do good to* Zion, *and build up the walls of* Jerusalem. So then let this be the constant tenor of your prayers, even in secret: when thou prayest alone, *shut thy door*, says our Saviour here; shut out as much as thou canst the sight and notice of others, but shut not out the interest and good of others, say *Our Father*, as the heathen call their God, Ζεῦ Πάτερ, &c.

Father.] He is indeed our Father*, as the author of our being, beyond all the visible creatures; he breathed upon man the breath of life. But the privilege of this our natural relation, the sin of our nature hath made fruitless and comfortless to us, till we be restored by grace, and made partakers of a new sonship: we are indeed the workmanship of God, but being defaced by sin, and considered in that estate, our true name is *children of wrath.*

But the sonship that emboldens us to draw near unto God as our Father, is derived from his only begotten Son. He became the son of man, to make us anew the sons of God. Being thus restored, we may indeed look back upon our creation, and draw out of it to use in prayer with God, that we are his creatures, the workmanship of his hands, and he in that sense *our Father.* But by reason of our rebellion, this argument is not strong enough alone, but must be supported with this other, as the main ground of our comfort, that wherein the strength of our confidence lies, that he *is our Father in his Son Christ;* that by faith we are invested into a new sonship, and by virtue of that may call him *Father*, and move him by that name to help and answer us[i], *To as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God.* Our adoption holds in Jesus Christ as the head of this fraternity; therefore he says, *I go to my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God.* He says not, to our Father and our God, but severally, *mine* and *yours;* teaching us the order of the new covenant, that the sonship of Jesus Christ is not only more eminent in nature, but in order, is the spring and cause of ours, as St. *Cyril* well observes†. So then he that here puts this word in our mouths, to call God *Father*, he it is by whom we have this dignity and comfort that we call him so.

But this adoption is accompanied (that we think

* Τῷ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμὲν. Act. xvii.

[i] John i. 12.

† Cyrill. Hieros. Catech.

it not a naked external name) with a real change, and so great a change, that it bears the name of that which is the real ground of sonship, it is called *regeneration.* And these are inseparable, there be no sons of God by *adoption,* but such as are withal his sons by *regeneration* and *new birth:* there is a new life breathed into them from God; he is not only the Father of Spirits, by their first infusion into the body, and enlivening it by them, but by this new infusion of grace into the souls of men (as it seems to signify there[k], where he is speaking of spiritual sons) and enlivening them by it, which were dead without it, as the body is without them; and the Spirit of God renewing them, is the *Spirit of adoption, by which they cry, Abba Father.* He gives them a supernatural life by this Spirit sent into their hearts, and the Spirit by that regeneration which he works, ascertains them of that adoption which is in Christ Jesus, and in the persuasion of both they call upon God as their Father.

So then you that would have this confidence in approaching to God to call him Father, lay hold on Jesus Christ as the fountain of sonship; offer not to come unto God, but through him, and rest not satisfied with yourselves, nor your prayers, till you find some evidence that you are in him. And know that there is no evidence of your portion in the Son, but by the Spirit; therefore called the *Spirit of the Son, by which we call God Father*[l]. See whether the Spirit of God dwells and rules in your hearts; for *they that have not the Spirit of God are none of his,* says the apostle; but in the same chapter he assures you, that as *many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are undoubtedly the sons of God.*

If you then call on the name of God, and particularly by this name, *your Father,* depart from iniquity; be ashamed to pretend to be his sons, and yet be so unlike him, wallowing in sin. It cannot be that the sons of so holy a God, can be altogether

[k] Heb. xii. [l] Gal. iv.

unholy, and delight to be so; no, though they cannot be perfectly free from impurity, yet they that are indeed his children, do certainly hate impurity, because he hates it.

Do you draw near unto God in his Son Christ? Do you give yourselves up to be led by his Spirit; then you may account, and call him *your Father;* and if you may use this word, there is abundance of sweetness in it; it is a spring of comfort that cannot run dry, and it hath influence into all the petitions; as likewise the other word, *which art in heaven;* "thou that art so great and so good." Whose name and whose kingdom should we desire to be advanced so much as our own Father's, our heavenly Father? and his will to be obeyed on earth, as it is in heaven. Of whom should we seek our daily bread, but of our Father? and especially so rich a Father, possessor of heaven and earth; and forgiveness of our gracious Father, and conduct, and protection. In the hardest condition that can befal you, ye may come to your Father; all the world cannot bar your access: and there is no child may go to his Father with any suit with more confidence, than you may to your Father: and if there be mercy and power enough in God, thou cannot miss of help; he hath the bowels of a Father[m], yea, says our Saviour, *Can you that are evil give your children good things, how much more will your heavenly Father,* &c. The love of parents to their children they have from him; he hath given it to nature, so it is but a drop to the ocean of fatherly love that is in himself*. Let not then unworthiness scar his children; parents love their children and do them good, not because they see they are more worthy than others, for it may be far otherwise, but because they are their own.

[m] Psm. ciii. 13.

* Ante petitionem magnum accepimus, ut possimus dicere, pater, quid enim jam non det filiis petentibus pater, qui jam hoc ipsum dedit ut essent filii? S. Aug.

Yea, though we have run astray from him, and forgot very far the duty of children, yet he cannot forget the love of a Father; and our best is to return to him, it cannot be well with us so long as we go any whither else. The prodigal found it so, and therefore though he was convinced of that, that he was unworthy to be called his Son, yet he resolves to return, *I will go to my father.* Yea, though to thy sense he should seem to reject thee, yet let not go this hold, if thou hast but a desire to believe in him and love him, though thou canst find no more, and even while thou doubtest whether he is thy Father or no, yet press him with the name, call him Father, speak to him as thy Father; Jesus his Son, in whom he is well pleased, doth warrant thee. *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,* says *Job:* so resolve thou, though thou sawest his hand, as it were ready to throw thee into hell, yet cry to him still, and use this very name, *Father, reject me not;* never any perished with such a purpose.

Who art in heaven.]

Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. This compellation taken together, and rightly understood, works that due temper of prayer, the mixture of these two, *joy* and *fear*, *confidence* and *reverence.* There was some such thing spoken of *Augustus,* but it is most true of the divine majesty, that they that dare speak rashly to him, know not his greatness; and they that dare not speak to him (provided it be with due reverence and respect) know not his goodness.

That we all invocate one Father, teaches that new law of love one to another, which our Saviour, the author of this prayer, so often recommends, and makes the very badge of his disciples. It serves to comfort the meanest, and to abate the loftiness of the greatest that pray thus, as St. *Augustine* well observes, that they all meet and agree in this; the greatest kings, and their meanest subjects, all must speak to God as their Father, not only all alike hav-

ing their being from him as the Father of the spirits of all flesh, but the same adoption belonging unto all, high and low, that are believers. All the pomp and command and pleasures of princes, cannot make them happy without this grace of adoption; and no outward baseness prejudges any, but they may be happy by partaking of it. In this likewise is very clear our lesson of love to God, because our Father; for though (as they say) love doth descend much more than it ascends, and is here most of all verified, yet it doth ascend from the children to their parents by way of reflection, especially from the sons of God to him as a Father, who is love itself. And as this name draws the soul to the throne of grace with assured expectation of mercy, so it commands withal (as we said) honour and reverence, especially, being accompanied with this other word that mainly enforces that (ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς) *in the heavens*, answering the Hebrew word which is plural, and signifying that the glorious God is above all the visible heavens; and thus the profane authors speak of God likewise, ὑπέρτατα δώματα οὐαίων.

We know, although we are guilty of much forgetting it, that the Lord is every where present, neither excluded nor included any where; that he fills all places, not as contained in them, but containing them, and upholding them, and all things in them: but he is in heaven after a special manner, in the brightest manifestation of himself, and the purest service performed to him there. They cannot contain him, as *Solomon* expresses it[n]; yet his throne is there, there he dwells, as in his principal palace, in greatest majesty, as *David* teacheth us[o], and often elsewhere. But that he is not shut up there, and regardless of things below, we learn in that same place; for he adds, *His eyes behold, and his eye-lids try the children of men.*

This is added, 1. For *distinction*; as the apostle differencing him from the fathers of our flesh, calls

[n] 1 Kings viii. 27. [o] Psal. xi. 4.

him *the Father of spirits*; so here, from earthly fathers, *our heavenly Father.*

Observe. We cannot here know God according to what he is in himself, and therefore he is described to our capacity, and to our profit, so as we are able, and as it most concerns us to know him here, by his gracious relation to us as our Father, and by the excellency of his dwelling, as a sign of his greatness, that he is in heaven, both which are extrinsical to his essence: but thus we may learn thus much to worship and love him as the best and greatest, infinitely exceeding all that we can conceive of him.

2. As it is for distinction, so it is such a word of difference as is of excellent use.

1. To make the soul humble and reverend in approaching to God in prayer, if we consider it; will we not be wary how we behave ourselves in the presence of so great a king? It is very strange that our souls should not be possest with the deepest lowliness and self-abasement in the sight of God; worms in the dust, before the Majesty that dwells in heaven. This *Solomon* expresses, *He is in heaven, and thou on earth, therefore let thy words be few.* What is this we find in ourselves that makes us so drunk with self-conceit, not only in converse one with another, but with God? Surely we know him not, at least we consider not who he is, and where he dwells, and who we are, and where we dwell. Surely it would lay us low, if when we come before God, we would consider him as the most glorious king sitting on his throne, and compassed with glorious spirits, that offer him spotless praises, and we ourselves coming before him, as base frogs creeping out of our pond, where we dwell amidst the mire of sinful pollutions.

Thus indeed his highness should humble us in coming, but it should not affright us from coming before him; for though he is in heaven, and we on earth, yet he is our Father: thus ought we to join

these two, and behold them jointly, that we may have that right posture of mind by them that suits with prayer, *humble boldness.*

There may be undue distrust, but there cannot be too much humility of spirit in prayer: the more humble, the fitter to come to God: and he the more willing to come into the soul, and dwell in it; for that is the other house that he hath chosen. They seem very ill suited together; if the highest heavens be the Lord's one dwelling, it would seem fit that the other should be the richest palaces on earth, or stately built temples. No, the other is such a one as we most despise, but God prefers before other, even the most sumptuous building [p], *Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also* (a strange *also*) *that is of a broken and humble spirit,* &c. The highest heavens are the habitation of his glory, and the humble heart hath the next honour, to be the habitation of his grace.

2. As the word humbles the soul in God's sight, so it elevates it to heaven where God dwells, and fixes it there in prayer; and this elevation is not contrary to humility: the soul that is laid lowest in itself, is most sublime in converse with God *. And thus ought our hearts to ascend in prayer, which, alas, we usually suffer to lag and draw the wing heavily on the earth. *Unto thee, O Lord,* says the Psalmist [q], *do I lift up my soul*; that is the right and natural motion of prayer But there is another lifting up, that our souls are better acquainted with, which is spoken of in the Psalm immediately foregoing, *That lifting up of the soul unto vanity;* and the more so lift up, the further off from God. O the vainness of our hearts! and how hard is it to establish them on him that dwells on high? Even while

[p] Isa. lvii. 15.

* Sublimiter humilis & humiliter sublimis. S. Cyprian.

[q] Psm. xxv.

we are speaking to him, we suffer them to break loose and rove, and to entertain foolish thoughts: we would not use a king or great person so, nor any man whom we respect, when we are speaking to him seriously, to intermix impertinences, and forget what we are a saying. But we dare offer gross nonsense to the all-wise God; though the words go on in good sense, yet the prayer is so to him, when the heart intermixes vain thoughts. *Polum terræ miscet*, confuses and spoils all. And this is the great task (as we have said) to bring the heart before God, to set it on his holy mountain in heaven, while we pray, (it should be so certainly) and leave servile earthly thoughts at the foot of the mount.

3. It gives confidence. 1. Of the power of God, his rich ability to grant all our requests: He, that Lord of all, and as greatest possessor, hath his throne in the highest heavens, and doth what pleaseth him in heaven and in earth; this, with the other, compleats our comfort, *good-will* and *power*, *Our Father in heaven.* And this we may apply to all our wants for assurance of supply, and to all our enemies, and the church's enemies, that our prayer shall be heard for their foil and disappointment. *He sits in heaven and laughs*[k]. *They rage, and tumult, and consult,* &c. A great bustle and noise they keep, and he sits and laughs at them; he scorns all their proud attempts: for that with ease he can scatter them in a moment; one word of his mouth overturns them and all their contrivances.

2. It is a confirmation of our portion in heaven: if he, who is in heaven, be our Father, then our inheritance lies there, in that land of peace where it cannot be lost or impaired, and he will bring his children to the possession of it. To be the sons of God is not a stile without an estate, an empty title; no, he that makes us sons, makes us heirs likewise, *sons we are in Christ*, and *co-heirs with Christ.* He came down to earth for this purpose, to make a

[k] Psalm ii.

new purchase of heaven for us, and he is returned thither to prepare it for us. *I go to prepare a place for you that where I am ye may be also.*

Hallowed be thy name.]

The sense of many wants and necessities drives a Christian daily to God in prayer, yet certainly that which draws him most strongly to it, is of a higher nature. The sense of his duty to God, and the delight he hath to do that homage and honour to him; and therefore in prayer the main current of his heart runs that way, and so agrees with this pattern given us by our Saviour: wherein we see clearly that our prime desires are to be bestowed on the glory of God, and that not only placed first, as to be preferred before all other suits, but to be regarded still in all the rest, and they all referred to it. And to make the impression of this desire the deeper on our hearts, and to give the fuller vent of it in expression to them that have it, there are, you see, three of these six petitions spent on it; this is the first of them, *Hallowed be thy name.* This suits well with the stile here given to God, *Our Father. If I be a Father, where is my honour?* says the Lord by his prophet: and here his children are taught to join these two together, thou art our Father, and so glorious a Father dwelling in heaven; therefore our desire is, that thou mayest have honour, that thy name may be hallowed, and thy kingdom come. We will enquire,

1. What is meant by his name. 2. What is the hallowing or sanctifying it. 3. What the petition itself is.

Briefly, his name is himself, as he is made known to us, and conceivable by us, and differenced from all other beings, as men are by their names one from another; for to this purpose are all these several names and attributes given him that we find in scripture, that we may so conceive of himself as here we are capable.

2. To sanctify his name (we know) cannot be

to infuse holiness into it, or effectually to make it holy; for neither can we so make any thing holy, nor can the name of God be so made holy, for it is most holy of itself, yea he is holiness itself, and the fountain of all holiness; but according to the double sense of the word *blessing*, as mutual betwixt God and man, so is this of sanctifying. *Blessed be the God* (says the apostle[l],) *and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings.* His *benedicere* is *benefacere;* he blesseth us really, as the giver of all blessings, and of blessedness itself; and our blessing him is no other, but the acknowledging of this, that it is he that blesseth us, and praising him for it. Thus he sanctifies us, makes us holy, purifies us by his Spirit from our natural unholiness and filthiness, according to his promise[m], and according to our Saviour's prayer[n], and we sanctify the Lord and his name, (as here, and *Isaiah* viii. 13,) when we know and acknowledge that he is holy and use his name holily; and thus they only sanctify, who affectionately pray thus, that his name may be sanctified, whose hearts he hath first sanctified and made them holy.

More particularly and distinctly, the sanctifying of God's name hath in it these things. 1. To have right thoughts of the holiness and majesty of God. 2. That upon so conceiving of him, our hearts be reverently affected towards him. 3. Not only to have that due apprehension and reverence of his holiness in the habit, and so let it lie dead within us, but often to stir up ourselves to the remembrance and consideration of it, to call in our thoughts to act about it; so this will increase our knowledge and reverence, (as all habits grow by acting) and will excite the soul to praise him, as the *Psalmist* speaks, *Give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.* 4. The declaring and extolling of his holiness, speaking upon all seasonable occasions honourably of his name. 5. The humble sense and ac-

[l] Ephes. i. 3. [m] Ezek. xxxvi. 25. [n] John xvii. 17.

knowledgment of our own unholiness in his presence; and therefore all these lowly confessions of sins, and of their own unworthiness that we find in the prayers of the prophets, are so many hallowings of the name of God, giving the glory of holiness to him alone, and taking with the shame of their own pollutions, thus *Dan.* ix. *Isa.* lxiv. &c. As some of the *Americans* have a custom, when they appear before their king, to put on their worst apparel, that all the magnificence may rest upon him alone, and appear the better. Thus though the majesty of God, in itself being infinite, needs nothing else to commend it, yet to our apprehension of it, it may be thus; and the saints in desire of his glory may intend this, to set off the lustre of his purity and excellency, in the humble confessions of their own vileness, *To thee, O Lord, belongeth righteousness, but to us confusion of face.* 6. The hallowing of God's name is an earnest endeavour of conformity with him in holiness; first in heart, that must be the principal seat of it, and then holiness in all our words and actions, and the whole course of our lives. This is that which the Lord perpetually presses upon his people, *Be ye holy, for I am holy;* and this is the most effectual sanctifying of his name by way of declaring it holy, when his people walk in holiness. Though you tell the world, that he is holy, they know him not, they can neither see him nor his holiness; but when they see that there are men taken out of the same lump of polluted nature with themselves, and yet so renewed and changed, that they hate the defilements of the world, and do indeed live holily in the midst of a perverse generation; this may convince them that there is a brighter spring of holiness where it is in fulness, from whence these drops are that they perceive in men; for seeing it is not in nature, there must be another principle of it, and that can be no other but this holy God; thus is his name hallowed, and he known to be holy by the holiness of his people.

So then the petition takes in all, and in it we desire the sanctifying and magnifying of God's name in every possible way. 1. By ourselves, that we may mind his glory, and by his grace sanctify his name. 2. By others, that our Lord may be more known and honoured in the world; they would gladly have many hearts and many tongues brought in to confess the Lord, and his holiness and greatness. Thus the *Psalmist* stirs up the angels to bless the Lord[o], not that they need exciting, but to shew his own affection to God's praises. 3. And because there is still some alloy and mixture of unholiness, in all the hallowing of his name here below, all our services stained; therefore as the godly do in this request, wish all the exalting and sanctifying of God's name among men, that is attainable here, so, I conceive, they do as it were applaud to those purer services and praises that are given him above; and sensible how far they fall short themselves, they are glad to think that there be such multitudes of angels, and glorified spirits, hallowing and praising his name better and more constantly; not ceasing day nor night to cry, *holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.* And here they follow as they can, and give their acclamation, though in a lower key, yet as loud as they are able, *even so, Lord, hallowed be thy name.* Now the cause and source of this their great desire of exalting and hallowing the name of God, is their love to him, which the sight that he hath given them of his excellency hath kindled in their hearts.

After that, their chief delight is to think of him, and speak of his name; gladly would they have him highly esteemed by all, and this is their grief, that they can find so few to bear them company and help them in this, in hallowing and extolling his name, which is so deep engraven on their hearts. See how pathetically the *Psalmist* repeats that again and again[p], *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and his wonderful works to the children*

[o] Psalm ciii. [p] Psalm cvii.

of men. And when they hear or see any thing tending to the dishonour of his name, this wounds them, and pierces them through as a sword, as the *Psalmist* speaks. They are far from envy or evil eye, yea they rejoice in the gifts and graces that God bestows upon others, although it be beyond what they have themselves; for still it serves their desires, and answers what they are most earnest in, it tends to the hallowing and glorifying of the name of God. And what they have themselves, they are not in danger to grow vain upon it; rather they wonder at the free grace of God, and extol that, and think with themselves, "What am I, that he should have had compassion on me, and plucked me out of the crowd of the lost world, and given me any desire to hallow his name, while others are blaspheming it, and delighting to dishonour it?" but ever the more they receive from God, they are the more humble, the more desirous of his praise, and regardless of their own. Any holiness that is in them they know well is from him, and therefore all the glory of holiness must return thither, from whence holiness originally comes; and the very end for which they desire increase of holiness in themselves, is to the end that they may the more hallow his name, from whom they have it; and by the increase of their stock, there may be an increase of the tribute of praise to God.

But, alas! how far are we from this mind? What hypocrisy is it, for the same mouth to utter this request, that dare profane the name of God by vain swearing? That which is *holy*, as the *Hebrew* word imports, is *separated* from common use, (although it was not holy before) and ought not to be profaned; least of all this name, that is not made holy by such a separation, but is primitively holy in itself; and they that use it rashly and unholily, are deeply guilty of despising the majesty of God. It is not possible that any that is truly sensible of his greatness and holiness, can customarily abuse his

name, that blessed name that he hopes to bless for ever. You say, it is your custom; it is a wonder to hear men speak thus as an excuse, it is the deepest accusation. Are not men known by their customs? Do not those discover what they are? It is your custom, what gain you by that? You must confess, it is such a one as is the custom of the children of satan, the profest enemy of God's name, as the delight and custom of hallowing his name is the badge of his children. 2. It is your custom; then know, it is his custom not to acquit them, but make them feel the weight of his punishing hand, that dare make it a custom to dishonour his name. Again, they that profane his holy day, they that sanctify not his name by calling on it daily in private, and generally all that by an unsanctified life do blot the profession of Christians, what do they mean to lie so grossly, not unto men but unto God, to his face, in praying thus? as if they desired the hallowing of his name by all, and yet do nothing but unhallow it themselves. Think it not sufficient to the hallowing of his name, that his house and worship is purged of abuses, though they be holy, yet unless we ourselves be holy too, we pollute all in our use of them, the worship, and sabbaths, and name of God, our filthy hands defile all. Let us not thus provoke God, lest in just wrath and punishments, he sanctify his own name upon us, which we profane, as he threatens against the *Jews* by his prophets.

Be not satisfied to think slighty and superficially of God, take time to consider him, and know who he is; and then you will reverence him in your thoughts. It deserves and requires all the whole heart to be taken up with it; and alas! what is a heart, a narrow thing, though the largest of hearts, as *Solomon's, large as the sand of the sea*, to an infinite God! We can find time for our earthly thoughts, and for vain foolish thoughts, that are good for nothing, and shall we shut out God, or think any sudden passing look enough for him.

2. Behave yourselves with regard of him in his worship; ἅγια ἁγίως, let holy things be done holily. 3. Honour it in your lives, especially such as do know his name, grow daily more respective and tender of it, and be more circumspect in your actions, and *as he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.*

Thy kingdom come.] He that is the beginning of all things, must likewise of necessity be the end of them all, and then are our intentions rightest and purest, when we are most possest with the desire of that highest end, the glory of God, and look straightest unto it: and if this purpose ought to diffuse through all our actions, certainly in prayer it should be most lively and active, because prayer is so direct, and express a turning of the face of the soul unto God, and setting of its eye upon him. Therefore, this petition follows forth the same desire with the former, wishing honour to God. He is a most holy God, and the *former* request was for his glory in *that*, in the *sanctifying* of his name; he is a king, a great king, the greatest of all, and *this* wishes his glory in that sense, that his *kingdom* may be advanced. *Thy kingdom come.* 1. We shall enquire what his kingdom is. 2. What is the coming of it. And, 3, Shall speak of the petition itself.

This kingdom is not his universal supremacy over all the world, and all the creatures in it, as being their Maker and their Preserver, and so having the highest and justest title, and the most absolute kind of dominion over all things; but his peculiar royalty over his church. By the former he is called *King of Nations*[q], and by the latter his stile is *King of Saints*[r]. Of the former the *Psalmist* speaks[s], but that which he adds *ver.* 3. concerns the latter, and so on in the *Psalm*, and *ver.* 7. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, that the King of Glory may come in.*

This kingdom is gathered and selected out of the

[q] Jer. x. 7. [r] Apoc. xv. 3. [s] Psm. xxiv. 1.

other, and though the less in quantity, yet in God's account the far more precious than all the rest; the church is the jewel in the ring of the world, in it he hath his peculiar residence and chief delight; as kings chuse one of their palaces, and (if they have more) one of their kingdoms to dwell in more than another. Those things that are hid from the rest of the world concerning this king, are made known to his subjects of this his select kingdom, and it is in it that he opens up, displays after a special manner more than in all the world besides, both the glory of his majesty, and the riches of his bounty, *here* in part, and fully *hereafter*, and according to that difference it is distinguished into the kingdom of *grace*, and that of *glory*.

The kingdom of *grace* is to be considered, 1. In the external means and administration of it. 2. In its inward being and power: In the former sense, it is of a larger extent; but in the latter, of a more uniform nature in itself, and more conform to its head. The former, the kingdom of grace in its outward administration, is plainly the whole visible church; but the inward power of the kingdom of grace, is only in the hearts of those that are truly sanctified, and members of the invisible church.

Jesus Christ is ordained and anointed the king and head of both, political; but of the one, natural, and therefore altogether indissoluble, not only in regard of the whole, but of each part and member of it.

The visible church is but a little parcel, a kingdom chosen out of the world; but the truly godly, that are alone the subjects of the inward kingdom of grace, are but a small part of that part, a choice part of the visible church, as it is a choice part of the visible world.

Now these three, The kingdom of glory, and those two kinds of the kingdom of grace stand in this subordination; the inward kingdom of grace, is the way and preparation for that of glory, and

the outward kingdom of grace in the visible church, is the means and way of introducing, and establishing, and increasing the inward; so that both of them look forward to the kingdom of glory, as their utmost end, and shall terminate and end in it.

The first of these, the external or political kingdom of Christ in the visible church, consists in his absolute and supreme authority, to appoint the laws of his church, and rulers by these laws. And the use of the word, and sacraments, and discipline, according to his own appointment, is the acknowledgment of him as king of his church.

The other, the inward kingdom of grace, is then received in the heart, when the Spirit of God moves it to a willing subjection to Jesus Christ, and the whole soul submits itself to be governed by him; he enters indeed by conquest, and yet is most gladly received: it is both a lawful and a favourable conquest, because he frees the soul, which is his by so many rights, from the tyranny of a most cruel usurper, the prince of darkness, and brings in a kingdom full of sweetness and happiness; there is no worse in it than these, *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

This is the folly of an unbelieving mind, that it entertains most false prejudices against the kingdom of Christ, thinks that if it let him in, it shall be controlled and curbed, and therefore resolves against it, and studies how to hold him out, *consults* (as it is in the 2d Psalm) *against the Lord and his anointed.* But this is a lamentable madness to dream of liberty in the midst of chains, and to be afraid of a deliverer; there is no soul that opens to this king of glory, but can testify that it never knew what true liberty was till it admitted this kingdom of God, till there was a throne for Christ erected within it.

The third, the kingdom of *glory*, would you hear wherein that consists? It is such as we cannot hear nor speak of as it is. And this indeed says more of it than all we can say, That the excellency

of it is unspeakable, yea unconceivable: this we are sure of, to speak comparatively of it, (which is our help in things we understand not in themselves) that all the kingdoms of the world, unite all their glory together, are base and poor in respect of it, but *splendida in serico*, and that all the delights we have here, not only of nature, but even of grace, are less to it than the smallest sparkle is to the sun in its brightness. All that is done here by our king Christ, in the ruling of his church, and power of his ordinances, and bestowing of graces on his own, are but preludes and preparations for that, and when that cometh, this way of ruling his church and people shall cease, as having attained its end. Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father; word and sacraments and discipline shall be at an end, and then God shall be *all in all.*

2. The coming of the kingdom of God in the former two, is the extending and spreading of them to these places, and persons that have not yet received them, the increase of their power where they are entertained; for they come gradually, and that kingdom of glory as it is concerned in the other, comes forward in them so far, and hastens towards its perfection; but in itself as their consummation, it shall come at once altogether in the end of time.

3. So then in the petition all these are included, and in their largest extent; for it is to take it too narrow and too low, to restrain it only to our own interest in this kingdom, either of grace or glory, or both. Thus *David* excites *all to praise the Lord*[t], but most his own soul begins with that, and ends with it. Although all they that desire it aright, do desire that they may partake of it, (for if they desire that God may be glorified, they cannot, but even out of love to that glory, besides their own happiness, desire that they themselves may be among these that may honour God as the subjects of his kingdom) yet they stay not there, but dilate their

[t] Psalm ciii.

hearts to wish the advancement and accomplishment of his kingdom in all the elect, and in all those ways that tend to it; and their love may rise to that high strain, as without considering their own interest at all, yea, supposing that they were to be shut out of his kingdom themselves, yet still to wish, *Thy kingdom come.* "Let others enjoy and bless thee, Lord, for ever, even though I should be excluded: Let thine elect be gathered, though I were none of them: Be thou great, O Lord, whatsoever become of me."

1. Considering what a height of glory will arise to God out of the final subduing of his enemies, and full deliverance of his church, and the bringing home all his children after all their sufferings and sorrows, to sit down together to that great marriage-supper of the Lamb; they cannot but thus breathe forth their longings and wishes, that that time may be hastened, and the fulness of their Lord's kingdom accomplished, where it shall abide for all eternity.

2. Both in relation to that end, and likewise in respect of the very present glory that redounds to God in it, they earnestly desire the advancement and enlargement of Christ's kingdom here on earth. For besides that thus it is rising to its perfection, it is no small present glory to our king Christ, as a testimony of his invincible power, that he rules in the very midst of his enemies, and in despite of them all[u]. Not only sits sure and keeps his own, thrust at him who will, but when he pleases gains upon them, and enlarges his territories, and grows greater by their resistances and oppositions. He is here, as *David*, often assaulted, and put to defend his kingdom often in war, but always a conqueror; but after this militant kingdom he shall be as *Solomon*, who likewise typified him, reigning in perfect peace.

Now because the enemies of his kingdom are not yet, as they shall be, all under his feet, but round about him, and incessantly plotting and working

[u] Psalm cx

against him, and satan hath his kingdom and his throne in the world opposite to Christ; therefore this is one chief point of this request, that all adverse power may be brought low, that all his enemies may lick the dust, and melt before him as wax before the fire: and for us, especially in these times, that that kingdom of Antichrist, the Son of perdition, may, answerably to that his name, be brought to perdition, that God would remember his promise, (for the faithful are called his remembrancers, though he forgets not, and hath his set time for judgment, yet he loves to be stirred up by the cries of his children) that he would make good at length those words he hath spoken of *Babel's* ruin, and the flourishing estate of his church in these latter times.

That the power of the word, and purity of religion, maugre all the policy and power of men opposing it, may spread and extend itself, and make irresistible progress, as the sun in his course: that Jesus Christ may be daily taking further possession of the nations, even to the ends of the earth, according to the patent of his Father's donation. And the certainty of its endurance and growth till it be compleat, should not abate, but increase the vigour of our prayers for it; and the nearer things are their accomplishment, the more usually the Lord excites the hopes and prayers of his people about them, and they pray the more earnestly [x], moving naturally in it, and therefore fastest when nearest their place.

Again, we pray in this, that where Christ doth reign in his outward ordinances, there he would bring in his spiritual kingdom into the souls of men, that *sinners may be converted unto him:* the love of the glory of Jesus Christ will desire this earnestly, that many hearts may be brought in to submit to him; for the glory of a king is in the multitude of his subjects. Further, that they who are his people may grow more conform to his laws; that his do-

[x] Dan. ix.

minion may be more powerful in their hearts and lives; and particularly, that we ourselves may find it so. You that will not receive the kingdom of God within yourselves, to what purpose do you speak this, as if you desired it to be enlarged, and flourish abroad? You can have no comfort in it, remaining slaves to sin, and so enemies indeed to it; neither the kingdom of Christ in the government of the church on the one side, nor on the other, the coming of his kingdom of glory, can do you any benefit, while the third is wanting, the inward kingdom of his grace, which is the true end of the former, and means to partake of the happiness of the latter. Why wish you the day of the Lord? as the prophet says of that day he there speaks of: mistake it not, though that day of his kingdom shall be all glory in itself, it shall be to you, remaining still impenitent, darkness and not light, full of horror and amazement. 2. As you can have no comfort in his kingdom, so you cannot really wish its advancement; you wish it well elsewhere, as if you were content it should be any where, rather than within yourselves. But would you indeed have his kingdom to be embraced and advanced, then do for one, let him be thy king; first give him thine own heart, and then wish him many more, for then thou wilt wish it heartily and truly. You that have received this kingdom, yet have need still, even in that sense, to wish the coming of it in farther degrees and fuller efficacy. Find you not many rebels yet unsubdued? No doubt they that search and know their own hearts, will, and often do, complain of them to their king. "O such swarms of lusts, and unruly irregular desires! when shall they all be brought into subjection?" And so they lift up their wish, from this to the other, the full and glorious kingdom, and say again and again, *Thy kingdom come.* This is the noble desire that takes up the hearts of the godly, while others are desiring and pursuing low base things; their minds, and their endeavour to their power, are

chiefly set upon this, the advancement of the kingdom of God. They seek not themselves, and their own things, with the world, to the prejudice of this kingdom; no, they desire to lose any thing, to suffer contempts and abasements themselves, so this kingdom may flourish. *St. Paul* cares not what he be accounted, *modò magnificetur Christus*[y], as the faithful ministers of state, (and wise princes chuse such) that are not making up themselves to their master's disadvantage, but always preferring his honour to their private benefit, feeling his losses and gains more than their own; as was said of St. *Augustin, Dominicis semper lucris gaudens, & damnis mœrens.* This is the right temper of the servants and ministers of Jesus Christ, to be all for their master, willing that their name, and estates, and lives, and all may make a part of his footstool to step up to his throne; not forced as his enemies to be so, but willingly laying themselves low for his glory. And this comfort they have, that when his kingdom shall come in its fulness, and all his enemies shall be trodden down for ever, then they shall be glorified with him, and shall see his glory with exceeding joy. Therefore do they so often desire his coming, and are so weary of all they see here: and when he says himself, for their assurance and comfort, *Surely I come quickly,* their earnest desire makes them echo, *Even so, come Lord Jesus.*

There is some loss to the flesh, if we will hear it in this desire in each kind; the erecting of Christ's kingdom in purity in his church, thrusts out the outward pomp and magnificence that naturally we like so well: his kingdom of grace cannot be in the soul, without the forsaking of all our accustomed and pleasing ways of sin; but they that know the excellency of his kingdom, are well content to forego all that suits not with it. Thus that his kingdom of glory may come, the world must be burnt up, &c.

[y] Phil. i.

example for perfection, *Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

The obedience in heaven is, 1. Universal, without chusing and excepting; and this is, because the will and command of God is the very reason of it. The angels are said *to do his commandments, and to hearken to the voice of his word*[h]; they wait but for a word from him, and that is enough. And in this should we desire to be like them. Though we cannot fully keep any one commandment, yet should we exclude none of them from our endeavour; yea the rather, because we want that perfection in the degree, should we study this other, which is a kind of perfection in the design and purpose, *to have respect to all the commandments*, as *David* says; to have our eye upon them all, as the word there is: So *Psm.* xvi. 8. *I have set the Lord always before me*, [*æqualiter posui*] in an even constant regard of his will. And the want of this discovers, that much of our obedience hath not the right stamp on it, no way heavenly.

A man may think he approves and does the will of God in some things, where it is but by accident, because the letter of the commandment is coincident with his own will; and so it is not the will of God, but his own, that moves him: therefore in doing that which God commands, he does not God's will, but his own; and therefore when they meet not, but are contrary, there it appears, for he leaves God's will then, and follows his own. A covetous father condemns the prodigality of his lavish son, and the son again cries out against the avarice of his niggardly father. And thus both seem to condemn sin: but the truth is, neither do it; it is but two extreme sins fighting together, neither of them regarding the rule that God hath set; it is but their two idols choaking each other, as the Heathen set their gods together by the ears. But they that therefore hate sin, because of God's countermand, and love his will

[h] Psm. ciii. 20.

for itself, their obedience is more even, and regards the whole will of God, and at all times; for there is that universality too in their obedience, conform to that of heaven: *So shall I keep thy law* (says *David*) *continually for ever and ever.*

See a man's carriage when tempted or provoked to some sin; for when the occasion is out of reach, and out of sight, what wonder then he forbears? But when it offers itself, as by company, intemperance, or cursing or swearing by passion, it appears, if a man yield then, that sin was not out before, but only lay close and quiet within till it was stirred, as mud in the bottom of water, *natura vexata prodit seipsam.* So a man may for his own gain, or his own glory, do God's will. *Jehu* could say to *Jonadab*, *Come and see my zeal for the Lord.*

2. It is chearful. It is the very natural motion of glorified spirits to be acted and moved by the will of God, *They excel in strength*, says the *Psalmist* in that *Psalm* ciii. *and do his commandments.* They have no other use for all their strength, that is the proper employment of it. Thus the godly man, in so far as he is renewed (for in so far he suits with heaven) delights himself in the way of God's commandments, takes more pleasure in keeping them, than profane men do in all their pleasures of sin, by which they break them. He is never well but when he is in the way of obedience, and the ways of sin are painful and grievous to him; then hath he most inward gladness and contentment, when he keepeth closest to his rule. And the reason why he finds the law of God thus pleasant is, because it is not to him as to the ungodly one without, driving him violently, but it is within him, and therefore moves him sweetly. *I delight to do thy will, O my God*[1], and he adds, *Thy law is within my heart*, or in the midst of my bowels; so *Psalm* lxxxiv. *In whose heart are thy ways;* not only their feet in the ways, but the ways are in their hearts.

[1] Psalm xl. 8.

3. They do the will of God in heaven unanimously and harmoniously: there is neither an evil eye of envy among them, nor a lofty eye of pride, whatsoever degrees there be among them in their stations and employments. Not to be curious in that, nor obtrude ourselves into things we have not seen, yet sure the lesser do not envy the greater, nor the greater despise the less; and the reason is, because they are all so wholly taken up, and so strongly united in this joint desire of doing the will of God. Thus ought his servants here, each one in his place, and according to that which God hath dispensed to him, the greatest humbly, and the meanest contentedly, mind this, and nothing but this, to do his will.

Answerably to the sense of this petition do godly men in prayer, 1. Vent their regret and grief unto God, that there is so little regard and obedience to his will amongst men, that they see the greatest part *taking pleasure in unrighteousness*, as the apostle speaks. Thus *David*, *Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law.* And as they bewail ungodliness without them, so especially the strength of corruption within themselves; they begin there, and express their grief in the presence of God, that they are so clogged and hampered with sin, cleaving fast to them, and crossing their purposes of obedience; saying with the apostle, *I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind.* 2. They declare their desire of redress, both in themselves and others; that their great desire is, that more obedience were given unto God, and particularly that they had more faculty and strength to serve him[k]. 3. They pray in this, for the effecting of this their desire, that God would incline men's hearts, and particularly their own, to the obedience of his will, (whatsoever vain will-worshippers say, they are indeed in that sense θελόθρησκοι, make a deity of the will) not doubting that it is in his hand to do so, and that he hath

[k] Psalm cxix. 4, 5.

more power of our hearts than we ourselves have; otherwise it were in vain to put these supplications into his hand, if he have no power to answer them, to give them the real answer of performance. *Incline my heart unto thy law*, &c. *Turn us, O Lord*, &c. 4. They do in this request offer up their own hearts to God, to be fashioned and moulded to his will: and every godly man, if he had the hearts of all the men in the world in his dispose, he would dispose them the same way, lodge them with his own, and make one sacrifice of all; his own he gives wholly, resigns it up to his Lord, to be as a piece of wax in God's hand, pliable to what form he will, to do with it what he will, to turn out and banish whatsoever displeases him, and to make it to his own mind. In a word, this is the desire of a Christian, that his own will may be annihilated, and the will of God placed in its room, that he may have no will but God's, that he may be altogether subject to God's commanding, and his working will, to do what he commands, and to be heartily content with what he does; for both these are in it *.

Where he commands any thing, though our own corrupt will grumble at it, and think it hard, we must tread upon it to obey his will, making that the rule of all we do. To this end we must endeavour to be acquainted with his will, and know what it is, otherwise we cannot do it, but once knowing it, this is the end of knowing, to do, otherwise (you know) that knowledge will make us the worse for it, the more guilty.

It is a safe and comfortable thing to walk every step by his direction; the constant regard of that, is that (we see) which conforms us to heaven. It was observable how this will prevailed with *Abraham;* he was a loving father, it appears, and upon *Sarah's* private motion, while there was no more, he could not find in his heart to put *Ishmael* out of

* It is love that makesthis union of wills, Idem velle & idem nolle.

doors, that was but *the son of the bond woman*; but upon God's command he was ready to put *Isaac* to death, that was *the son of the promise*. And he that taught us to pray thus, gives us his own example in this, and he did the will of his father indeed, as it is done in heaven, and he came to the earth for that purpose; then said he, *Lo I come to do thy will, O my God*; and in that great and most painful part of his work, *not my will, but thine be done*, . For our actions then, let his word be our guide; and for the events of things, and all that concerns us, let his good pleasure and wise disposing be our will; let us give up the rudder of our life into his hand, to be steered by him.

For our actions, is it not better to observe his will, than to be subject to our own corrupt wills? and to satan's, *led captive at his will?* and as it is our best to do what pleaseth him, so in all his dealings with us to be pleased with what he does; not to think it were better for us to be richer or greater in the world than we are, or to murmur and struggle under affliction. There is nothing to be gained by this; *Who hath resisted his will* at any time? In all things he doth what he will, whether it like us or not: our repining hinders not his working at all, but it hinders our own comfort; our wrestling and fretting doth but pain ourselves. If we be his (as we profess) then we may be assured he loves us; and if we believe that, and withal believe that he is wiser than we, then we must confess, that whatsoever he doth with us is better than our own chusing for ourselves could be.

This is the only way of constant quietness and contentment of mind. Who is there outwardly so prosperous, but meets with many things that cross his will? Now he that hath renounced his own will, and is fixed upon a continual complacency with the good pleasure and providence of God, to will what he wills, and nothing else; every thing that befals him, he looks upon that side of it as

God's will, and so is satisfied. "Doth God think this good, and shall I think it evil?"

There is difference of estates, but all coming from the same hand, which is *Job's* consideration, to embrace and kiss the worst that can come, is our duty; *It is the Lord* (said *David*) *let him do with me what seems good in his eyes*[1]. Thus, "Wilt thou have me poor or rich, healthful or sick, esteemed or despised? Wilt thou that I live, or that I die? I am thine, thy will be done."

Give us this day our daily bread.] Man is made up of two different principles, a soul derived from heaven, and a body at first moulded out of earth, as *Nazianzen* expresses it, πνεῦς καὶ χοῦς, the *breath* of God, and the *dust* of the earth *: and according to his composure, so is this prayer composed; being made for his use, it is wisely fitted to his condition.

The greatest part of it is taken up with such desires as are spiritual, and so most suitable to his worthier part, his soul, such as do immediately concern God, and such as properly concern itself. Yet the body is not wholly shut out, though the meaner part: yet being a part of man, and the workmanship of God, this one petition is bestowed upon its concernment.

Observe in it briefly, 1. The matter or object of the request. 2. The qualification of it. The matter under the name of *bread*, not only bread for all food, as the *Hebrews* do; but food, so named, for all other necessaries. By bread, as the chief support and staff of man's life, is meant all needful temporal blessings, food and raiment, and health, and peace, &c. a blessing on the works of our calling, and the seasons of the year, and all our lawful temporal affairs.

Though a godly man looks upon the necessities of this life as a piece of his present captivity, and is often looking beyond it to that purer life he hopes

[1] 2 Sam. x. 12. * Ex igneo spiritu, & terreno corpore.

for; yet in the mean while he doth, in obedience to God, use these things, and in dependence upon God he seeks them at God's own hand.

In the request, together with its object, as here we have it, there is, 1. Piety. 2. Moderation. *Godliness*, and *soberness*.

1. *Piety*, asking our bread of God; asking it in the true notion by way of gift. There is a natural cry or voice of our necessity, and that not only ungodly men, but unreasonable creatures have, the very beasts and fowls, as the *Psalm* hath it, *The ravens ask their meat from God*: but this spiritual cry of prayer, is the peculiar voice of God's own children.

Now to ask bread, or needful temporal things at the hands of God, is not only no way incongruous to the piety and spiritual-mindedness of a Christian, nor no wrong to the majesty of God; but on the contrary, it were impiety in man, and an injury to God not to do so. We have here the warrant of his own command, *pray thus*, and is it not most reasonable?

1. Seeing these things are necessary for us to receive, and in the hand of God to bestow, why ought we not to seek them there?

Although in his wisdom he knows what we need, and is in bounty most ready to furnish us, yet this is the homage we owe to God, to present ourselves and our necessities before him, and seek our supplies by prayer. In it there is a clear acknowledgment of the divine providence and goodness, and of our faith and reliance on it; and faith is not only signified in prayer in these things, but is acted and excited, and by that means is increased and strengthened. 2. Godliness hath both kinds of promises, those of the life to come, and those of this life; and as godliness hath right to them both, so it teacheth to use them both, and particularly this way, by turning the promises into prayers, as a means appointed by God, both to fit us for obtainment, and

to obtain the performance of them. 3. Though a man hath his provision by him, not only of a day, but of many years, yet hath he need still daily to ask it of God, for it is still in God's hand to give it him, or not to give, though it is in a man's own hand in present possession. 1. It is in God's disposal to continue it to him, or suddenly to pluck it from him out of his hand, or even out of his mouth, *ut bolus ereptus è faucibus.* How many have been thus on a sudden turned out of great estates into extreme poverty, either by the hands of men, which are moved by God, or by some immediate accident from his own hand, and others by little and little, their estates consuming and melting as snow-balls. In the former the judgment of God is as a *lion*, and in the latter as a *moth*, as the prophet speaks. Again, 2. If God do continue a man in his possessions, yet there is further needful for his chearful use of daily bread, that calmness and content of mind, and healthfulness of body, that are God's peculiar gifts, without which all is unsavoury. Is the mind in bitterness or distemper, or the body tied to its sick-bed? this disrelishes a man's daily bread, though it be of the richest kind. 3. Having bread and a disposition to use it, yet there is further an influence of blessing from God needful to make it serve its proper end; and without this, that staff of life is but as a broken staff in a man's hand that cannot support him. 4. Besides that ordinary blessing, there is yet something further that a godly man desires, and desires it most of all, a secret character and stamp of the peculiar favour of God even upon his bread, his temporal enjoyments. And this is a proper fruit of prayer, as there is (as is already said) a peculiar voice of God's own children in this request, so God knows it particularly, and distinguishes it from the common voice of natural men, and other creatures that call for supply; and therefore he gives that peculiar voice of their suit a peculiar answer, together with the daily bread which he gives to

others, and a common blessing on it, they have something that is not given to others. This is that which particularly sweetens their bread, that they receive it after a special manner out of their Father's own hand, having humbly asked it by a prayer as his gift.

That is the other thing observable in the word of the request, *Give.*

We are not by this forbidden, no, nor dispensed with from labour and honest industry for it, but after all our labour we are still to acknowledge all as a free gift, both the bread we obtain by labour and the strength by which we labour. Just as we find it of the other bread, the bread of life[m], *Labour for it, which the son of man will give;* laboured for, and yet given. The fruit of our labours may be a just reward from men, but it is always free from God, even these lowest benefits to the best and holiest men: *I am less.* (says *Jacob*) *than the least of thy mercies.* We have no motive for the least mercy but his own goodness, as our Father; so that it suits with this, as with all the other requests here, though we deserve nothing, yet he is our Father: It is proper for children to ask bread of their father, as our Saviour teaches us in the next Chapter, therefore he teaches us here to say, *Father, give us bread.*

2. The moderation of the desire appears, in comparison of the number of the other petitions, all the rest for things spiritual, and but one for temporals; those that regard the glory of God as the chief, are three to one with it, and those that concern our own spiritual good two for one.

Thus for the number; and the order or place, which so many have taken quite contrary, it suits very well with this, as the least of our requests, and so to be accounted by us. It is strange that this right place of it should have scared men from its right meaning, and persuaded them to take it for

[m] John vi. 27.

our spiritual food, or the bread of life, because it is the first of the three. But taking it as it is, for this life's necessaries, there is no need of such reasons as some give for its standing in this order, that are a little light and unsolid. But to omit even these that are more pertinent, which justify this order, though this petition be less than the two following, it seems truly the only fit place for it, for that very reason, because it is the least. It is known to be the ordinary course of skilful orators to place the meanest part of their speech in the middle; and in this let the ear of any understanding mind be judge, whether it sounds not much better, that this request pass in the middle, than if the prayer should have ended with it, whereas now it begins spiritually and closes so. And this petition, which is *de impedimentis militiæ nostræ*, (for the things of this life prove so too often) is cast in the middle.

Now, how few are there that follow Christ's estimate in this, that have the very strength of their desires, and most of their thoughts on things that are spiritual, and do but in passing lend a word to the things of this life*; this proportion few will admit, it makes not for their purpose. The apostle gives this character of those that perish, that *they mind earthly things*.

But to consider the words, each word designing the matter of this request doth clearly teach us moderation in it. *Give us our daily bread. Having food and raiment*, (says the Apostle[n],) *let us be content.* How few be there of us, if any, that want these, and yet how few that have contentment? It is the enormity and boundlessness of our desires, that causeth this. There is no necessity of curious food and raiment, but such food as nourishes, and such raiment as covers.

Our daily bread, in the original ἐπιούσιον. Not at all to dispute the word, its genuine sense is, *such as is*

* Quamprimum à corpore ad animam redeundum. SEN.

[n] 1 Tim. vi. 8.

fit for our daily sustentation, therefore rendered *daily bread;* and answers well to the word in that petition of *Agur*°, *convenient* or *proportionable food*, and so agrees with that we said of bread; *proportionable*, not to our lust, but our necessity. This was the sin of the *Jews*, and a most impertinent sin in the wilderness, *they asked meat for their lust;* they were not content of bread for themselves, but must have meat for their lust too, must have that fed likewise. We are not to be carvers of the proportion ourselves, but leave that to God, who knows best what is convenient for us; therefore the word is there, *of my set* or *ordained portion*, ordained by thee.

Our bread, Ἡμῶν.] Not seeking any other but that which is our own by our just industry, and God's free gift. What is it but the base immoderate desire of having, that stretches a man beyond this? When a man lays down that conclusion with himself, that he must have so much, then it follows, that any way tending to that he must use, if he can, by right; but if not, any way rather than miss; by violence and oppression, or by deceit, through all ways fair and foul*: when a man is once upon that journey there is no stopping, until either God recall him, or he plunge himself in the pit of destruction. *They that will be rich* (says the apostle) that are resolved upon that, *they fall into temptation and divers snares, that drown men*, &c. that is the issue.

This day.] It is true that this condemns not a due providence in men for themselves and their families, in a just and moderate way; but men deceive themselves in this, few stay there, but under that name harbour gross avarice and earthliness. But in this word, we have the true temper of a Christian mind, that whatsoever is his own lawful providence, and whatsoever is the success of it, that he lives and relies on, is the providence of God, not his own;

° Prov. xxx 8.

* Si possis rectè, si non, quocunque modo rem. Hor.

he lives upon that from one day to another, as a child in his father's house; and for provision for afterwards thinks it is as good in God's hand as if it were in his own, and therefore asks not so much stock or so much yearly rent, but *bread for to day.* If he have much land or great revenues, yet trusts no more in that, than if he had nothing; and if he have to-day, and nothing for to-morrow (as the *Israelites* had manna) yet trusts no less in God than if he had thousands; he resolves thus, "Whether I have much or little I am at God's providing, and live upon that from day to day; *the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want*[p]."

Ευσέβεια αὐτάρκεια[q]. These two together, as we have observed them here together, *godliness* and *moderation*, godliness in this particular, of casting over our care of temporal things on God by prayer[r]. *Let your moderation be known*, &c. But how shall we have it? *Make your requests known unto God*, and that *in all things*; that will ease you, and not trouble him. But when we lodge such desires as are not fit indeed to be imparted to him, this is our shame and proves our vexation. It is a wonder what men mean; but it is a folly so rooted in men's hearts that no discourse will pluck it up; they imagine that there is happiness in having much, and will neither believe religion, nor reason, nor experience, though all teach the contrary. They cannot be persuaded to make this the rule of their desires, *daily bread*, and *for to-day*, but are still projecting for long time to come, though they are not sure of a day. Men are still beginning to live, even when their years tell them they should be thinking how to die; are upon new contrivances for the world, when they must shortly leave it: and this is one point of this our disease, that it grows still, and is strongest in old age, when there is least reason for it*.

[p] Psm. xxiii. 1. [q] 1 Tim. vi. 6. [r] Phil. iv. 5.

* Quo minus viæ restat, eo plus viatici comparare.

What is this that riches can do? Our Saviour tells us if we will believe him, that *man's life doth not consist in the abundance of the things he possesseth**; there is something necessary we see, and truly that is not much, and what is more than serves many times proves but more encumberance; one staff will help a man in his way, but a bundle of staves would burden and weary him. Would men but stop a little and ask themselves, 'What is this I do?' 'What do I aim at in all my turmoil?' It might possibly recall them, would they but hear *Solomon's* question, and tell him *what good the rich have of possessing more than they use, but only of beholding them with their eyes*; if there be any thing more, it is more care and troubles†. He that hath a hundred rooms hath but one body, he can lodge but in one at once; he that might have sea and land ransacked for delicates to his table, hath himself but one appetite to serve with them all.

Then consider that beyond the bounds of this petition, if a man once pass, there be no bounds after, he knows not where to stay ‡: one thousand would have something more to save it unspent, and when that grows a little, it is best even to make another thousand, and save that too, and fall a scraping for more.

And if this is always a frenzy, most of all in these times, *Behold*, says God to *Baruch*, *I will break down that which I have built, and that which I have planted will I pluck up, even this whole land, and seekest thou great things for thyself*[a]? "But is it not wisdom to be provident, and see far before a man; and to look no further but to the present, is the character of a fool?" True it is indeed, and therefore the truly wise man despises this provi-

* Ad supervacua sudatur.

† Et curæ circum laqueata tecta volantes.

‡ Depinge ubi sistam.

[a] Jer. xlv. 4, 5.

dence for a base uncertain life, and is content if alive but from one day to another; but there is a higher design in his head, a providence of a further reach that sees afar off indeed, to make himself an estate for eternity, that takes up his thoughts and pains; the other is the grossest short-sightedness, to look no further than a moment; it is indeed, μυοπαζειν, as St. *Peter* speaks. But that life the Christian's eye is upon, is of another nature, where none of these poor things shall have place, *No marrying, nor giving in marriage,* as our Saviour says, so no eating nor drinking, no need of bread, nor of this prayer for it, but we shall be *as the angels* of God.

And forgive us our debts, &c.] *Thy loving kindness,* says *David, is better than life.* Therefore this request rises above the former: in it we sought bread for the present life; in this we entreat his favour, not corn, nor wine, nor oil, but that that glads the heart more than them all, *The light of his countenance,* that the thick cloud of our sins be dispelled by a free pardon, as he promises[t].

In this petition we have, 1. The request. 2. The clause added. That which is here called *debts, St. Luke* hath *sins;* and here in the observation our Saviour adds, they are called, παραπτώματα, *offences.* Now sin, as it is called a debt, is taken for the guiltiness of sin, which is no other but *pœnas debere,* to owe the suffering of punishment, or an obligement to the curse which the law hath pronounced against sin; and because this results so immediately from sin, therefore sin is often put for the engagement to punishment, so the apostle's phrase[u] may be taken. So then, the debt of sin being the tie to punishment, which follows upon it, the forgiving of sin can be no other than the acquitting of a man from that curse, setting him free from his debt, his engagement to suffer; and therefore to imagine a

[t] Isa. xliv. 2. [u] 1 Cor. xv. ult.

forgiveness of sin with retaining of the punishment, is direct nonsense and a contradiction.

To pass the words of this request through our mouths (as the rest) is an easy and common thing, but altogether fruitless; but to offer it as a spiritual supplication of the heart unto God, is a thing done but by a few, and to as many as do offer it so, it never returns in vain, but is certainly granted. Now to offer it so as a lively spiritual suit unto God, there are necessarily supposed in the soul that presents it, these things,

1. A clear conviction and deep sense of the guiltiness of sin, both in *general* what this guiltiness is, what is that debt that sin engages us in, that misery to which it binds us over, 1. As the deprivement of happiness, the loss of God and his favour for ever. 2. The endless enduranee of his wrath, and hottest indignation, and all the anguish that that is able to fill the soul with to all eternity. Unsufferable, inconceivable torment! described to us by such things as we can understand, but going infinitely beyond them, *A gnawing worm that dies not,* and *a fire* that cannot be quenched, this is the *portion of the sinner* from God, and the *heritage* appointed to him, as *Zophar* speaks. Then in *particular* there must be a seeing our own guiltiness, a man must know himself to be nothing else but a mass of sin, and so fuel for that fire; must see himself a transgressor of the whole law of God, and therefore abundantly liable to that sentence of death.

2. Upon this apprehension will follow a very earnest desire to be free, and such a word as that, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?* And seeing no way either to satisfy or escape without a free pardon, the soul then looks upon that as its only happiness, with *David, Blessed is the man,* O the blessedness of that man! *whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.*

3. In this request there is a taking of it as a thing

attainable, for it is implied that there is no impossibility in it; and this arises from the promises of God, and the tenor of the covenant of grace, and the Mediator of that covenant revealed in the word, apprehended only in their general tenor.

4. It imports a humble confession of guiltiness before the Lord, as follows there*, *I acknowledge my sin*, &c. *and hide not mine iniquity.* The way to find God hiding and covering it, he perceived was for himself not to hide it, the way to be acquitted at God's hand, is for the soul with humility and grief to accuse itself before him.

5. Where there is this sensible knowledge and humble acknowledgment of sin and misery, and earnest desire of pardon, then doth a man truly offer this suit unto God with strong affection, *Lord this is my request, that my sin may be forgiven;* and prays it in faith, which is a more particular laying hold on the promises, believing that he will forgive, and therefore waits for an answer, to hear that *voice of joy and gladness*, as *David* speaks; to hear the word of his pardon from God spoke into his soul. And for this cause (besides the need of daily pardon for daily sins) the most godly men have need to renew this suit, that together with pardon they may obtain the comfortable persuasion and assurance of it; and though they have some assurance, yet there be further degrees of it possible and desirable, clearer evidences of reconcilement and acceptance with God.

Forgiveness itself is indeed the main, and is often granted, where the other, the assurance of it, is withheld for a time, but there is no question that we may, yea, that we ought to desire it, and seek after it. He is blessed that is pardoned, though as yet he know it not, yet doubtless it abates much of his happiness for the time that he does not know it*.

* Psm. xxxii.

* Non est beatus, esse qui se non putet.

As the philosopher says, *The poor man thinks him happy that is rich, and the sick man him that is in health;* their own want makes them think so. Now this forgiveness of sin is happiness indeed, yet a man must first feel the want of it, before he judge so: but here is the difference when he hath obtained it, he shall think so still; whereas the other being tried, are found to fall short, and do not make any man happy.

Seeing this is a request of so great moment, may we not wonder at ourselves, that are so cold and indifferent in it? But the true reason of this is, because so few are truly sensible of this heavy debt, of the weight of sin unpardoned. A man that feels it not prays thus, not much troubling his thoughts whether it be granted or no; but he that is indeed pressed with the burden of sin, cries in earnest, *Lord, forgive. David* knew what he said, when he called him *blessed whose sin is forgiven,* the word is, that is *unloaded of his sin.* He was a king, and a great captain, but he says not, he is a blessed man that wears a crown, or that is successful in war, but he whose sin is taken off his shoulders; whatsoever he is otherwise, he is a happy man; it is in vain to offer a conscience groaning under sin any thing else, until it be eased of that. If you should see a man lying grovelling under some weight that is ready to press him to death, and should bring sweet music to him, and cover a table with delicates before him, but let him lie still under his burden, could he (think you) take any pleasure in those things? Were it not rather to mock him to use him so?

And though we feel it not as troubled consciences do, yet we are truly miserable in all enjoyments, until this forgiveness be obtained. To what purpose daily bread, yea what is the greatest abundance of all outward things, but a glistering misery, if this be wanting? But he that is once forgiven, and received into favour with God, what can befal him

amiss? Though he hath no more of the world but daily bread, and of the coarsest sort, he hath a continual feast within; as he that said, *Brown bread and the gospel is good fare.* Now the gospel is the doctrine of this forgiveness of sin, and is therefore so sweet to an humbled sinner; yea, though a man have not only a small portion of earthly comforts, but be under divers afflictions and chastisements, yet this makes him chearful in all, as *Luther* said, *Feri Domine,* &c. use me as thou wilt, seeing thou hast forgiven my sin, all is well.

Lastly, As there must be earnest desire in the request, so withal firm belief; *ask in faith.* If once thou art become a humble suiter for mercy, and that is the great desire of thy heart, that God would take away thy sin, and be reconciled to thee: then know that he will not cast back thy petition in displeasure, now he is gracious, and whatsoever thou hast been, consider what he is. Doth he receive any for any thing in themselves? What is the cause he pardons any, is it not for his own name's sake[h]? And will not that reason serve for thee as much as others? Will it not avail for many sins, as well as for few? Hast thou multiplied sin often, abused his mercy, but now mournest before him for it? then he will multiply to pardon[i]. Thou hast rebelled much, but he is thy Father, and hath the bowels of a father to a repenting child: and this stile we give him in this prayer, as fitly urging all our suits, *Father, forgive us our sins;* therefore forgive, because thou art our Father. And then consider, that he that puts this petition amongst the rest in our mouths, hath satisfied for believers, paid all their scores, and answered justice to the full, and in him we are forgiven; it is a free forgiveness to us, though he hath paid for it; and he himself was freely given to us, to undertake and satisfy for us. Yet let not any thus embolden themselves to sin; this were the grossest impudence, to come to crave pardon of sin

[h] Isaiah xliii. 25. [i] Isaiah lv. 7. Jer. iii. 1.

while we delight in it, and to desire it to be forgiven while we have no mind to part with it and forsake it; for this privilege belongs only to repenting and returning sinners.

As we forgive our debtors.] This is added, both as a fit motive for us to use with God, and a suitable duty that he requires of us: the former we may perceive in the manner that *St. Luke* hath it, *For we also*, says he, *&c.* "Thou, Lord, requirest of us to forgive others, and thou workest it in some of us to do so; how much more then may we hope that thou wilt forgive us? If there be any such goodness in us, it is from thee, and therefore is infinitely more in thyself, as the ocean of goodness."

Again, this is likewise a very profitable argument to move us to this duty, as we see clearly by our Saviour's returning to speak of it after the prayer: it is not only bound upon us by his precept, but by our prayer.

This *(as)* just as before in the third petition, means not equality in the degree, but conformity in the thing.

Now the request running thus, they that do not forgive their brethren, turn it into a most heavy curse to themselves, and in effect pray daily, *Lord, never forgive me my sin;* and whether they say thus or no, he will do thus, if we be such fools as not to accept of such an agreement. He hath infinite debt upon our heads, that we shall never be able to pay; now though there is no proportion, yet he is graciously pleased without further reckoning to forgive us all, and discharge us fully, if we accept (as it were) of this his letter of exchange, and for his sake forgive our brethren the few pence that at the most they can be owing us, in lieu of the thousands of talents that he acquits to us. And by this, as our certain evidence, we may be assured of our pardon, and rejoice in it, as our Saviour after clearly affirms; and therefore the contrary (which he likewise tells us) may well take our debates, and ha-

treds, and desires of revenge, as a countersign, testifying to us, that we are not forgiven at God's hands.

And think not to satisfy him with superficial forgivenesses and reconcilements: would we be content of such pardon from God, to have only a present forbearance of revenge, or that he should not quarrel with us, but no further friendship with him; that he should either use strangeness with us, and not speak to us, or only for fashion's sake? And yet such are many of our reconcilements with our brethren. God's way of forgiving is thorough and hearty, both to forgive and to forget[k], and if thine be not so, thou hast no portion in his.

What a base miserable humour is this same desire of revenge, this spirit of malice that possesses men, and think themselves brave in it, that they forgive no injuries, can put up no affronts, as they speak! *Solomon* was of another mind, and he was a king, and a wise king, and knew well enough what honour meant; *It is the glory of a man to pass by a transgression*, said he. And we see inferior magistrates and officers may punish, but it is a part of the prerogative of kings to pardon; it is royal to forgive, yea it is divine, it is to be like God[l], *Be you perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect:* and the perfection is, *do good to them that persecute you*, &c. *as he causeth the sun to shine on the just and unjust.*

There is more true pleasure in forgiving, than ever any man found in revenge. *Fr. Desales* said, "That whereas men think it so hard a thing to forgive a wrong, he found it so sweet, that if the contrary were commanded him, he would have much ado to obey it." Were the law of love written in our hearts, it would be thus with us; it would teach us effectually to forgive others, if we knew and found in our experience the boundless love of God in forgiving us.

[k] Jer. xxxi. [l] Matt. v.

And lead us not into temptation, &c.] As the doctrine of divine mercy, mistaken and abused by carnal minds, emboldens them to sin; so being rightly apprehended and applied, there is nothing more powerful to possess the heart with indignation against sin, and love of holiness: so that this request agrees most fitly with the former; where that is presented aright, the heart will be no less sincere and earnest in this other. The guiltiness of sin, and the prevailing power of it, are the two evils that the godly feel more than all other pressures in the world; deliverance from both is jointly promised in the new covenant[m], and here jointly entreated in these two petitions. We shall explain,

1. What this *temptation* and *evil* is.

2. What is meant by *not lead into* it, and to *deliver*.

Temptation.] In the original Πειρασμὸς, a trial, that which gives proof of a man's strength and of his disposition, draws forth what is within him. And thus in most things we meet withal in the world, there is some *tempting* faculty to try us what we are, on the using of them; but especially such things as are more eminent in their nature, that have much power with us. As eminent place and public charge try both the ability and integrity of men, afflictions try the faith and stability of men's minds. Injuries try whether they are truly meek and patient or no; they stir the water that was possibly clear at top, and so try whether it be not muddy at the bottom*.

But by *temptation* here are meant, occasions and provocations to sin. So likewise the word (*evil*) in the other clause, is not to be taken for afflictions and crosses, but for the *evil of sin*, or for that *evil one*, as he is called, 1 *John* ii. 13. and that particularly in relation to the evil of sin, wherein he hath so frequent and so great a hand.

There be outward things that are not in themselves evil, and yet prove temptations to us, because

[m] Jer. xxxi. * Natura vexata prodit seipsam.

they meet with a depraved corrupt heart in us; as riches, and honour, and beauty, &c. and to intemperance, dainty meats, or the wine *when it is red in the cup*, as *Solomon* speaks; and upon these, men sometimes turn over the blame of their disorders, but most foolishly.

Other temptations and tempters there be without us, that are themselves evil, and by tempting partake of our sin; the profane example and customs of the world, ungodly men by their practices, and counsels, and enticements, drawing others to sin, putting others into the same mire wherein they are wallowing.

But the most effectual tempter of all, is that which the apostle *St. James* gives up as the chief, and without which indeed none other could prevail, *Every man is tempted of his own concupiscence;* whosoever it is that begets it, that is the womb wherein all sin is conceived, and that *brings it forth*, as he there adds; yea this were able of itself to be fruitful in sin, though there were not a devil to tempt it to it, and doth no doubt often tempt us without his help.

Yet, because he is so continually busied in this work, is so constant a stickler in the greatest part of sins in the world, therefore it is not unlikely that this is particularly meant of him.

Howsoever, he is out of doubt the greatest of all outward tempters, (and therefore it is pertinent to consider his share in them) the most skilful, the most active and diligent, and he that manages all other kind of temptations against us, both such as are without us in the world, and, such as are within us, he works upon our own corruption, stirring and blowing it up by his suggestions, and sometimes throwing in balls of his own infernal fire, that are grievous and abominable to the soul into which he casts them. It is his name and profession, ὁ πειραζων, that great pirate, that robs upon all seas, that is every where catching the souls of men. And he is well

seen in his trade, a knowing spirit that manifested his skill shrewdly in his first essay against man, that serpent's first poison killed the whole race of mankind; and now he is perfected by long experience and practice, hath his methods, as arts after a time are drawn into method. He hath his topics, his several sorts of temptations for several tempers, and hath great insight into the subject he is to work upon, and so fits the one to the other.

The profane that will be easily drawn to the grossest sins, he is not at the pains to find out other ways for them, but hurries them along in that high way to destruction, using his advantage either of their gross ignorance or hardness of heart, &c. Others that are resolved to live outwardly blameless, he endeavours to take and hold fast to himself by pride, and self-love, and malice, and covetousness, by formality in religion, unbelief, which are things, though smaller wrought than some others, yet that are as strong, and hold men as fast to be led captive at his will.

And the godly, because they are escaped and set free from his tyranny, and he is desperate of reducing them, yet because he can do no more, he is sure to be a perpetual vexation and trouble to them, so far as he is let loose; he is most unwearied in his assaults, gives them no respite, neither when he gains upon them, nor when he is foiled and repulsed. Let us next consider,

2. What the request is,—not to be *led* into temptation,—and, to be *delivered.*

Lead us not.] Not that God doth solicit a man to sin, for that is most contrary to his most pure nature, as *St. James* tells us plainly, *He is neither so tempted nor tempts he any*: But his leading into temptation is briefly, 1. To permit a man to be tempted. 2. To withdraw his grace, and so deliver up a man into the hand or power of the temptation. Now this is that we pray, that the Lord be pleased either to bear off assaults from us, and suffer us not

to be tempted; or if he let temptation loose upon us, yet to give us the better, to order it so that it overcome us not. That which is here meant by leading, or carrying us into temptation, is the prevailing of it, or leading us unto a foil; and this we pray, that he would not do, that if he do bring us into the conflict of a temptation he would not leave us there, but bring us fair off again; and thus the whole petition runs, *lead us not, but deliver us.* And in this it is, that he would furnish us with his own grace, the holy habits of grace to be within us, as a constant garrison. And then, that either he countermand our enemy from assaulting, or that they be such as overmatch not the strength he hath given us, but may be below it: or that he send us the auxiliary strength of supervenient assisting grace to that we have, that howsoever the forces that come against us may be turned backward, and we may have the comfort, and he the glory of our victories.

So then in this we are taught, 1. To know the danger wherein we are; that we live in the midst of enemies, and such as are strong and subtile, that we have the prince of darkness plotting against us, and the treacherous corruption of our own hearts ready to keep correspondence with him, and betray us to him. That he hath gins and snares laid for us in all our ways, *Laqueos ubique, laqueos in cibo & potu,* &c. *Aug. Med.* in our solitude and in our converse, in our eating and drinking, yea snares in our spiritual exercise, our hearing, preaching, prayer, &c. and therefore as he here teaches us to pray against them, we must join that, to *watch* against them. 2. To be sensible of our own weakness and insufficiency, either for avoiding or overcoming these dangers. 3. To know the all-sufficient strength of God, his sovereign power over all adverse powers, that they are all under his command, so that he can keep them off us, or subdue them under us as he pleaseth, and so to have our recourse to this, and rest in it. The first of these considerations, if it take

with us, will stir us up to watchfulness, and the other two will persuade to prayer; and these are the two great preservatives against temptation that our Saviour prescribes, *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation: watch*, how can we sleep secure and so many enemies that sleep not? If we pray and watch not, we tempt God, and we lead ourselves into temptation. It is our duty (mock the word who will) to walk exactly or precisely, ἀκριβῶς, to look to every step, to beware of the least sins: for they, 1. By multitude make up a great weight. 2. They prove usually introductions to greater sins; admit but some inordinate desire into your heart that you account a small matter, and it is a hundred to one but it shall prove a little thief got in, to open the door to a number of greater; as the *Rabbins* speak, a less evil brings a man into the hands of a greater*.

2. Avoid not only sins but the incentives and occasions to sin; as St. *Chrysostom* observes well that of our Saviour, *when they shall say, here is Christ and there is Christ*, he says not, *believe them not*, but *go not forth to see;* and *Solomon's* instruction for avoiding the allurements of the strange woman, says not only, *go not in, but come not near the door of her house.* The way of sin is down hill†; a man cannot stop where he would, and he that will be tampering with dangerous occasions, in confidence of his resolution, shall find himself often carried beyond his purpose. If you pray, then watch too; but as that word commands our diligence, so this imports our weakness in ourselves, and our strength to be in another, that as we watch we must pray, and without this we shall watch in vain, and be a prey to our enemy. Truly had we no power beyond our own, we might give over, and be hopeless of coming through to salvation, so many enemies and hazards in the way. *Alas!* might a christian say, looking upon the multitude of temptations with-

* Levius malum inducit in manus gravioris. Drus.

† Motus in proclivi.

out, and corruptions within himself, and, the weakness of the grace he hath, *How can this be? Shall I ever attain my journey's end?* But again, when he looks upward, and lifts his eyes above his difficulties, beholds the strength of God engaged for him, directs his prayers to him for help, and is assured to find it; this upholds him, and anwers all. There is a roaring lion that seeks to devour, but there is a strong rescuing lion, *the lion of the tribe of* Judah that will deliver. *The God of peace,* says the apostle, *will bruise satan under your feet shortly.* He says not, *we* shall bruise him under our feet, but *God* shall do it; yet he says not, he shall bruise him under *his own* feet, but under *yours*; the victory shall be ours, though wrought by him; and he shall do it *shortly*, wait a while and it shall be done; and *the God of peace,* because he is the God of peace, he shall subdue that grand disturber of your peace, and shall give you a perfect victory, and after it, endless peace; he shall free you of his trouble and molestation. Grace is a stranger here, and therefore hardly used, and hated by many foes; but there is a promise of a new heaven and a new earth, where dwells righteousness, there it shall be at home, and quiet, no spoiling nor robbery in all that holy mountain.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

This pattern (we know) is the line under which all our prayers ought to move, all our requests to be conform to it; and are certainly out of their way, when they decline and wander from it. And if we observe it, we may clearly perceive it is a circular line; as indeed the exercise of prayer is a heavenly motion, circular as that of the heavens, begins and ends in the same point, the glory of that God to whom we pray, and who is the God that heareth prayer. In that point this prayer begins, and here ends in it, so that our requests that concern ourselves are cast in the middle, that all our desires

may move within this circle; though the things we pray for concern ourselves, yet are not to terminate in ourselves but in him, who is *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and end of all things; to desire not only the blessings of this life, but the blessedness of the life to come, more for his glory than for our own good.

This is genuine and pure love of God, in the pardon of our sins and salvation, to rejoice more in the glory of divine mercy, than in our own personal happiness; thus it shall be with us, when we shall be put in possession of it, and we ought to aspire to that measure of the same mind that can be attained here while we are in the desire and hopes of it.

For thine is the kingdom.] Though this clause is left out in divers translations, and wanting in some *Greek* copies, yet it is so agreeable to the nature of prayer, and the perfection of this prayer, that we ought not to let it pass unconsidered.

There is in it an enforcement of our prayer, but especially it is a return of praise; "Good reason we desire earnestly the sanctifying of thy name, and coming of thy kingdom, and obedience to thy will, seeing these are so peculiarly due to thee, namely, kingdom, and power, and glory; and seeing thou art so great and rich a king, may we not crave with confidence at thy hands all needful good things to be bestowed on us, and that all evil may be averted from us, that we may find thee gracious to us, both in giving and forgiving; and as in forgiving us the guiltiness of sin, so in freeing us from the power of sin, and preserving us from the power of our spiritual enemies that would draw us into sin? We are under thy royal protection, we are thy subjects, yea thy children, thou art our King and Father, so that thy honour is engaged for our defence. Whatsoever sum our debts amount to, they are not too great for such a king to forgive, they cannot rise above thy royal goodness; and whatsoever be our enemies, all their force is not above thy sceptre; though they be

strong, too strong for us, yet thou art much more too strong for them, for power is thine; and this we know, that all the good thou dost us, will bring back glory to thy name, and it is that we most desire, and that which is thy due; the *glory is thine.*"

Thus we see all our places of argument for our requests are in God, none of them in ourselves; as we find this in the prayers of the prophets, *for thine own glory*, and *for thine own name's sake;* nothing in ourselves to move God by, but abundance of misery, and that moves not but by reason of his bounty; so still the cause of his hearing, and the argument of our entreating, is in himself alone. Were it not thus, how could we hope to prevail with him? yea, how durst we offer to come unto him? It is well for us there is enough in himself both to encourage us to come, and to furnish us with motives to persuade him by, that we come not in vain. *Moses* had not a word to say for the people in themselves, such was their carriage, his mouth was stopt that way, yet he doth not let go this, "What wilt thou do with thy *mighty name?* It is true they have trespassed, yet if thou destroy them, thy name will suffer. Lord consider and regard that, and we know the success of it." Thus a Christian for himself, "Lord, I am most unworthy of all those things I request of thee, but whatsoever I am, thou art a liberal and mighty king, and it is thy glory to do good freely, therefore it is that I come unto thee; my necessities drive me to thee, and thy goodness draws me, and the poorer and wretcheder I am, the greater will be thy glory in helping me."

But it is withal an extolling and praising the greatness of God, and so we are to consider it.

Thine is the kingdom] "Other kings and kingdoms there be, but they are as nothing, they deserve not the naming in comparison of thine; they are but kings of little mole-hills, to the bounds of thy dominion; the greatest kingdoms of the world are but small parcels of this globe of earth, and itself all toge-

ther, to the vast circumference of the heavens, is as nothing, loses all sensible greatness. This point that men are so busy dividing among them with fire and sword, what if one man had the sovereignty of it all? He and kingdom both were nothing to thine; for sea and land, earth and heaven, and all the creatures in them all, the whole, all is thine; thou art Lord of heaven and earth, and therefore the kingdom is thine. As all other kingdoms are less than thine, so they hold of thine, thine is supreme; all the crowns and scepters of the earth hang at thy footstool." All kings owe their homage to this great king, and he disposeth of their crowns absolutely and uncontrolled as he will, he enthrones and dethrones at his pleasure, throws down one and sets up another; as we have a great monarch confessing it at length upon his own experience, being brought down from his throne, on purpose to learn this lesson, and was seven years in learning it[n].

The power.] The creatures have among them several degrees and several kinds of power, but none of them, nor all of them together have all power, this is God's. He is all-powerful in himself, primitively powerful, and all the power of the creatures is derived from him; he is the fountain of power: so that whatsoever power he hath given unto men, or any other creature, he hath not given away from himself; it is still in himself more than in them, and at his pleasure he can call it back, and withdraw the influence of it, and then they remain weak and powerless. And when he gives them power, he useth and disposeth of both them and their power as seems him good; therefore his stile is, *the Lord of Hosts.* He can command more armies than all the kings and princes of the earth, from the most excellent to the meanest of the creatures, all are his trained bands, from the Host of glorious spirits, to the very armies of grasshoppers and flies; and you know, that as an angel was employed against the

[n] Dan. iv. 34.

Egyptians, so likewise these contemptible creatures were upon service there too, and being armed with commission and with power from God, did perform the service upon which they were sent so effectually, that the wisest of Heathens were forced to confess, *this is the finger of God.*

This is the Lord to whom we address our prayers, that cannot fail in any thing for want of power, for he doeth what he will in heaven and in earth.

Glory.] In these two consists mainly the eminency of kings, in their power and their majesty; but they exceed not the meanest of their subjects, so far as this king surpasseth the greatest of them in both[p], *Clothed with* both *majesty and strength.* They are often resisted, and cut short of their designs for want of sufficient power, and are the best of them often driven to straits; sometimes men, sometimes money or munition, or some other necessary help is wanting, and so their enterprizes fall behind; but this king can challenge and defy all oppositions; *I work*, (says he) *and who shall let it?*

And as their power, so their majesty and glory is infinitely short of his; he *is the King of Glory*, as the *Psalmist* stiles him, alone truly glorious, both in the excellency of his own nature, and the extrinsical glory that arises to him out of his works. Of the former we can know but little here, for that light wherein he dwells is to us inaccessible; but this we know, that he is infinitely above all the praises even of those that do behold him. Likewise how unspeakable is that glory that shines in his works! in the framing of the whole world, and in the upholding and ruling of it from the beginning, in which appear the two former that are here ascribed to him, his *kingdom* and his *power*, and so this third, his *glory*, springs out of both. Then if we consider the glorious attendance that is continually about his throne, as the scriptures describe it to us, it drowns

[p] Psm. xciii. 1.

all the pomp of earthly thrones and courts in their highest degree[q].

For ever.] This kingdom, and power, and glory of God, besides their transcendent greatness, have this advantage beyond all other kingdoms, and power, and glory, that his are *for ever and ever*; all other are perishing, nothing but pageants and shows that appear for a while, and pass along and vanish. It was a wise word of a king, (especially at such a time) when he was riding in a stately triumph, and asked by one of his courtiers, thinking to please him, What is wanting here? he answered, *continuance*. Where are all the magnific kings that have reigned in former ages? Where is their power and their pomp? Is it not past like a dream? And not only are the kings gone but the kingdoms themselves, the greatest in the world fallen to nothing; they had their time of rising, and again of declining, and are buried in the dust: that golden-headed image had brittle feet, and that was the ruin and break of it all. But this kingdom of the most high is an everlasting kingdom, and his glory and power abide for ever.

Not only things on earth decay, but the very *heavens wax old as a garment*, (says the Psalmist) *but thou, O Lord, art still the same, and thy years have no end.*

1. It is a thing of very great importance for us to have our hearts established in the belief of these things, and to be frequent in remembring and considering them; to know that the kingdom is the Lord's, that he sovereignly rules the world, and all things in it, and particularly the great affairs of his church; that he is the mighty God, and therefore that there is no power, or wisdom, nor counsel of men, able to prevail against him; and that in those things wherein his glory seems to suffer for the present, it shall gain and be advanced in the closure.

2. Let us always, and in all things, return this to him as his peculiar due; thine is the glory, it "belongs to thee, and to none other," *Deo quæ Dei sunt.*

[q] See Apoc. iv.

3. Let us think most reverently of God: Oh that we could attain to esteeming thoughts of him, to think more of his greatness and excellency beyond all the world! It is our great folly to admire any thing but God, this is because we are ignorant of him; certainly he knows not God that thinks any thing great beside him.

Amen.] In this word concenter all the requests, and are put up together; *so be it.* And there is in it withal (as all observe) a profession of confidence that it shall be so. It is from one root with these words that signify *believing* and *truth*, the truth of God's promising persuades belief, and it persuades to hope for a gracious answer of prayer. And this is the excellent advantage of the prayer of faith, that it quiets and establishes the heart in God. Whatsoever be its estate and desire, when once he hath put his petition into God's hand, he rests content in holy security and assurance concerning the answer, refers it to the wisdom and love of God, how and when he will answer; not doubting that whatsoever it be, and whensoever, it shall both be gracious and seasonable. But the reason why so few of us find that sweetness and comfort that is in prayer, is, because the true nature and use of it is so little known.

AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE

TEN COMMANDMENTS.

EXOD. XX. 1.

And God spake all these words, saying.

IT is the character of the blessed man, and the way of blessedness, *to delight in the law of God*[a]. And because the eye is often upon that whereon the affection and delight of the heart is set; the sign of that delight in the law, is to have the eye of the mind much upon it, *to meditate on it day and night.* And that we may know this is not, as the study of many things are, empty speculation and fruitless barren delight, we are further taught the soul (as fixed in this delight and meditation) is a tree well planted, and answerably fruitful. The mind that is set upon this law, is fitly set for bearing fruit, *Planted by the rivers of water;* and is really fruitful, *Bringeth forth its fruit in his season.*

If this holds true of the law in the largest sense, taken for the whole will of God revealed in his word, it is no doubt particularly verified in that which more particularly bears the name of *the law;* this same summary of the rule of man's life, delivered by the Lord himself, after so singular a manner, both by word and writ.

So then the explication of it being needful for the ignorant, it will be likewise profitably delightful

[a] Psalm i.

for those that be most knowing and best acquainted with it; it is a rich mine, that we can never dig to the bottom of. He is called the *blessed man*, that is still digging and seeking further into the riches of it, *meditating on it day and night.* His work going forward in the night, when others cease from working.

We have in the Creed, the object of faith; in the law, the exercise and trial of love: *For love is the fulfilling of the law;* and, *if ye love me, keep my commandments*, saith our Saviour. And prayer is the breathing of hope, or, as they call it, *Interpretatio spei.* Thus in these three summaries are the matter of these three prime *theological* virtues, *faith, hope*, and *charity*.

The law rightly understood addresses us to the articles of our faith: for seeing the disproportion of our best obedience to the exactness of the law, this drives us to seek salvation in the gospel by believing; and our natural inability to believe, drives us to prayer, that we may obtain faith and perseverance in it, at his hands who is both the first author and finisher of our faith.

The preparation enjoined the people, teacheth the holiness of this law; the fire and thunder, and lightning, and upon these, the fear of the people, testify the greatness and majesty of the law-giver, and withal his power to punish the transgressors of it, and justice that will punish; that as he shewed his presence by fire seen in delivering this law, so he is (as the apostle teacheth us, alluding to this) *a consuming fire* to them that neglect and disobey it. The limits set about the mount, that they might not approach it, even after all their endeavour of sanctifying and preparing, read humility to us, teaching us our great distance from the holiness of our God, even when we are most holy and exactest in our preparations. Next,

Sobriety, φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν, not to pry into hid-

den things*, to hear what is revealed to us, and commanded us, and to exercise ourselves in that. *Hidden things belong unto God*, &c. And *lastly*, That the law of itself is the ministration of death, and hath nothing but terror in it, till the Messiah the Mediator appear, and the soul by his perfect obedience be accounted obedient to the law; but we must not insist on this now.

God spake.] The preface is twofold. 1. That of *Moses.* 2. Of God himself.

These words.] Ten words[b]; he added no more. Hence we may learn, (1.) The perfection of this law, that no more was needful to be added. (2.) The excellency of it, being so short and yet so perfect. For as it is the excellency of all speech, as of coin (as *Plutarch* hath it) to contain much in little, most value in smallest quantity; so especially of laws that they be brief and full.

That we may the better conceive of the perfection of this law, we must not forget these rules that divines give for the understanding of it in its due latitude. (1.) That the prohibitions of sin contain the commands of the contrary good, otherwise the number of precepts would have been too great. And on the contrary, (2.) Under the name of any one sin, all homogeneous, or sins of that kind are forbidden. (3.) All the inducements and occasions of sin, things that come near a breach, to be avoided; that which the *Rabbins* call the *hedge* of the law, not to be broken. They that do always that they lawfully may, sometimes do more. (4.) It is spiritual, hath that prerogative above all human laws, reaches the heart and all the motions of it as well as words and actions. This supreme law-giver alone can see the behaviour of the heart, and alone is able to punish all that offend, so much as in thought. It were a vain thing for men to give laws

* Scrutator majestatis opprimetur à gloria.

[b] Exod. xxxiv. 28. and Deut. v. 22.

to any, more than that they can require account of and correct, which is only the superfice and outside of human actions. But he that made the heart, doth not only give his law to it, but to *it* principally, and examines all actions there in their source and beginning, and therefore oftentimes that which men applaud and reward, and do well in so doing, he justly hates and punishes.

God spake.] All that was spoken by his messengers the prophets with warrant from him, was his word, they but the trumpets which the breath of his mouth, his Spirit, made to sound as it pleased him; but this his moral law he privileged with his own immediate delivery. Men may give some few rules for society, and civil life, by the dark light that remains in natural consciences; but such a rule as may direct a man to answer his natural end, and lead him to God, must come from himself. All the purest and wisest laws that men have compiled cannot reach that, they can go no higher in their course, than they are in their spring, *That which is from the earth is earthly,* saith our Saviour.

He added to this speaking, the *writing* of them likewise himself in tables of stone, that they might abide, and be conveyed to after ages. At first they were written in the heart of man by God's own hand; but as the first tables of stone fell and were broken, so was it with man's heart, by his fall his heart was broken, and scattered amongst the earthly perishing things, that was before whole and entire to his maker; and so the characters of that law written in it, were so shivered and scattered, that they could not be perfectly and distinctly read in it; therefore it pleased God to renew that law after this manner, by a most solemn delivery with audible voice, and then by writing it on tables of stone. And this is not all, but this same law he doth write anew in the hearts of his children.

Why it pleased him to defer this solemn promulgation of the law to this time, and at this time to

give it to a select people only, these are *arcana imperii* indeed, which we are not to search into, but to magnify his goodness to us, that he hath shewed us the path of life, revealing to us both the precepts of this law, and the grace and promises of the gospel.

It was the all-wise God that spake all these words, therefore he knew well his own aim and purpose in them, and doth certainly attain it.

It was not indeed that this law might be the adequate and complete means of man's happiness, that by perfect obedience to it he might be saved; for the law is weak for this, not in itself, but through the flesh[c], altogether impossible for it alone to save us, because impossible for us to fulfil it.

But it doth profit us much if we look aright upon it. 1. It discovers us to ourselves, and so humbles us, frees us from the pride that is so natural to us in the midst of our great poverty and wretchedness: for when we see how pure the law is, and we compared with it to be all filthiness and defilement, *Our best righteousness*, (as *Isaiah* says) *as filthy rags:* this causeth us to abhor ourselves: whereas naturally we are abused with self-love, and self-flattery arising from it. The point of the law (as they in the *Acts* were said to be pricked in their hearts) pricks the heart, that is swelled and puffed up with pride, and makes it fall low in sense of vileness.

2. As this discovery humbles us in ourselves, it drives us out of ourselves. This glass shewing us our pollution, sends us to *the fountain opened;* when we perceive that by the sentence of the law, there is nothing for us but death, this makes us hearken diligently to the news of redemption and pardon proclaimed in the gospel, and hastens us to the Mediator of the new covenant. As the spouse was then singularly rejoiced to find her beloved, when she had been beaten and hardly used by re-

[c] Rom. viii. 3.

proaching; the soul is then gladdest to meet with Christ, when it is hardest buffetted with the terrors and threatening of the law.

His promise of ease and refreshment sounds sweet after the thunderings and lightenings of mount *Sinai.* A man will never go to Christ so long as he is not convinced of misery without him, of impotency in himself, and in all others to help him.

3. It restrains the wickedness even of ungodly men; the brightness of it makes them sometimes ashamed of those works of darkness, which otherwise they would commit without check; and the terrors of it affright them sometimes from that, which they would otherwise commit without shame.

4. But chiefly it serves for a rule, and square of life to the godly, *A light to their feet,* (as *David* says) *and a lantern to their paths.* Either they have no rule of life, (which is impious and unreasonable to think) or this is it. Christ came not to dissolve it, but to accomplish and establish it; and he did carefully free it from the injurious glosses of the *Pharisees,* and taught the right sense and force of it[d]. He obeyed it both in doing and suffering, both performing what it requires, and in our stead undergoing what it pronounces against those that perform it not. It is a promise primely intended for the days of the gospel, as the apostle applies, *I will write my law in their hearts.* It is a weak conceit arising upon the mistake of the scriptures, to make Christ and *Moses* as opposites; no, *Moses* was the servant in the house, and Christ the Son; and being a faithful servant, he is not contrary to the Son, but subordinate to him. The very abolishment of the ceremonial law was not as of a thing contrary, but as a thing accomplished in Christ, and so was an honourable abolishment. And the removing of the curse and rigour of the moral law from us, was without wrong to it, being satisfied in a better for us, our surety *Jesus Christ.*

[d] Matt. v.

They are happy that look so on the law of God, as to be made sensible of misery by it, and by that made earnest in their desires of Christ, and that judge themselves; the more evidence they have of freedom from the curse of the law, to be not the less, but so much the more obliged to obey the law; that are still making progress and going on in that way of obedience, though it be with continual halting, and often stumbling, and sometimes falling; yet they shall certainly attain their journey's end, that perfection whereof they are so desirous.

This were the way to lowliness, not to compare ourselves with others, in which too many are often partial judges, but with this holy law. We use not to try the evenness of things with our crooked stick, but by the straightest rule that we can find. Thus St. *Paul, The law is spiritual, I am carnal:* He looks not how much he was more spiritual than other men, but how much less spiritual than the law.

I am the Lord.] This is the truest and most constant obedience, which flows jointly from reverence and love. These two are the very wheels upon which obedience moves. And these first words of the law are most fit and powerful to work these two; *Jehovah*, sovereign Lord to be feared and reverenced; *thy God;* and then, that hath wrought such a deliverance for thee: therefore in both these respects most worthy of the highest love.

This preface cannot stand for a commandment, as some would have it: for expressly it commands nothing, though by inference it enforceth all the commandments, and is indeed so intended. Though it may be conceived to have a particular tie with the first commandment which follows it immediately, yet certainly it is withal a most fit preface to them all, and hath a persuasive influence into them all; commanding attention and obedience, not in the low way of human rhetoric, but *stilo imperatorio*,

in a kingly phrase, becoming the majesty of *the King of kings, I am Jehovah.*

Here we have three motives to obedience, 1. His universal sovereignty, *Jehovah.* 2. His particular relation to his own people, *Thy God.* 3. The late singular mercy bestowed on them, *That brought thee out of the land of* Egypt. Each of them sufficient, and therefore all together most strongly concluding for obedience to his commandments.

1. *Jehovah.* Not to insist on the ample consideration of this name of God, of which divines, both *Jewish* and *Christian* have said so much, some more cabalistically and curiously, others more soberly and solidly. This they agree in, that it is the incommunicable name of the divine majesty, and signifies the primitiveness of his being, and his eternity; that his being is not derived, but is in and from himself; and that all other being is from him: That he is from everlasting to everlasting in himself, without any difference of time; but as eternity is exprest to our conceiving, *He who is, and who was, and who is to come,* Alpha *and* Omega.

Now it is most reasonable, that seeing all things, mankind, and all the creatures that serve for his good, receive their being from him, we likewise receive laws from him.

2. His majesty is alone absolute and independent; and all the powers of the world, the greatest princes and kings, hold their crowns of him, are his vassals, and owe obedience to his laws, as much as their meanest subjects, that I say not more, in regard of the particular obligation that their honour and eminency given them by him, doth lay upon them.

3. *Jehovah.* What are the numerous stiles wherein princes delight and glory so much, but a vain noise of nothing in comparison of his name, *I am?* And in all their grandeur, they are low petty majesties, when mention is made of this *Jehovah, Who stretched forth the heavens, and laid the founda-*

tions of the earth, and formed the Spirit of man within him[e]. What gives a man, when he gives all the obedience he can, and gives himself in obedience to God? What gives he him, but what he hath first received from him, and therefore owes it all as soon as he begins to be?

This authority of the law-giver is the very life of the law; it is that we so readily forget, and that is the cause of all disobedience, and therefore the Lord inculcates it often, *Levit.* xix. 36, 37. *I am the Lord,* ver. 31. and again repeated, ver. 37.

This is the apostle *St. James's* argument, by which he strongly proves his conclusion, *That he that transgresseth in one, is guilty of all.* He urges not the concatenation of virtues in themselves, though there is truth and force in that, he that hath one hath all; and so, he that wants any one hath none: but the sameness of the authority is his *medium, For he that said, Thou shalt not commit adultery, said also, Thou shalt not kill*[f]. The authority is the same, and equal in all. The golden thread on which these pearls are stringed, if it be broke in any one part, it scatters them all. This name of God signifying his authority, keeps the whole frame of the law together, and if that be stirred, it falls all asunder.

Thy God.] Necessity is a strong but a hard argument, if it go alone. The sovereignty of God ties all, either to obey his law, or undergo the punishment. But love is both strong and sweet, where there sounds love in the command, and the relation of the commander, there it is received and chearfully obeyed by love. Thus then, "*Thy God,* in covenant with thee," cannot but move thee.

We see then the gospel interwoven with the law, *Thy God* often repeated, which is by the new covenant, and that by a Mediator. God expects obedience from his peculiar people, it is their glory and happiness that they are his. It adds nothing to him,

[e] Zach. xii. 1. [f] Jam ii.

but much every way to them; he is pleased to take it as glory done to him, to take him to be our God, and doth really exalt and honour those that do so, with the title and privileges of *his people*[g]. If his own children break his law, he cannot but take that worse.

Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt.] By the remembrance of their late great deliverance, he mollifies their hearts to receive the impression of this law.

Herein was the peculiar obligement of this people; but ours, typified by this, is not less, but unspeakably greater, from the cruel servitude of sin, and the prince of darkness; from these we are delivered not to licentiousness, and libertinism, but to true liberty. *If the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed. Delivered*[h], *from the power of our enemies.* To what end? *To serve him without fear*, that terror which we would be subject to, if we were not delivered; and to serve him *all the days of our lives:* and that *all*, if many hundred times longer than it is, yet too little for him. It is not such a servitude as that of *Egypt*, from which we are delivered, that ended to each one with his life; but the misery from which we are redeemed, begins but in the fulness of it when life ends, and endures for ever.

The gospel sets not men free to profaneness; no, it is a doctrine of holiness, *We are not called to uncleanness, but to holiness*, saith the apostle; he hath indeed taken off the hardness, the iron yoke, and now his commandments are not grievous, *His yoke is easy and his burden light;* and they that are most sensible, and have most assurance of their deliverance, are ever the most active and fruitful in obedience; they feel themselves light and nimble, having the heavy chains and fetters taken off[i], *Lord, I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds:* and the comfortable persuasion of their redemption, is that *oil of*

[g] Deut. ii. 17, 18. [h] Luke i. [i] Psm. cxvi. 16.

gladness that supples and disposes them to run the way of God's commandments.

PRECEPT I.

Thou shalt have no other Gods but me.

The first thing in religion is to state the object of it right, and to acknowledge and receive it for such. This, I confess, is the intent of this first precept of the *law*, which is therefore the *basis* and foundation that bears the weight of all the rest; and therefore (as we said before) though the preface looks to them all, yet it looks first to this that is nearest it, and is knit with it, and through it to all the rest. The preface asserted his authority as the strength of his law, and this first precept commands, the acknowledgment and embracing of that his authority, and his alone as God. And this is the spring of our obedience to all his commandments.

But before a particular explication of this, a word, 1. Of the *division* of this law. 2. The *stile* of it.

I. *Division.* That they were divided, 1. Into two tables. 2. Into ten words or commandments, none can question. We have the lawgiver's own testimony clear for that; but about the particular way of dividing them into ten, and the matching of these two divisions together, there hath been and still is some difference; but this I will not insist on. Though *Josephus* and *Philo* the *Jew* would (to make the number equal) have five precepts in each table; yet the matter of them is more to be regarded, and persuades the contrary, that those that concern *piety*, our duty to God, be in the first table; and those together in the second that concern *equity*, or our duty to man; and the summary that our *Saviour* gives of the two tables is evidently for this. And that those precepts of *piety*, those of the first table are *four*, and they of

the second *six*. And so that first and second, as we have them, are different and make two, and the tenth but one, hath the voice both of antiquity and reason, as many divines on the *decalogue* do usually evince at large; which therefore were as easy, as it is needless to do over again.

The mud of the *Romish* church to the contrary, is plainly impudent presumption and partiality, chusing rather to blot out the *law*, than reform their manifest breach of it.

2. That I would say of the *stile* of the commandments, is but in this one particular, briefly: We see the greatest part of them are *prohibitive*, or (as we usually call them, though somewhat improperly) *negative*. *Thou shalt not*, &c. This, as is observed by *Calvin* and others, intimates our natural bent and inclinement to sin, that it suffices not to shew us what ought to be done, but we are to be held and bridled by countermands from the practices of ungodliness and unrighteousness,

Thou shalt not have, &c.] This order here, and so in the rest, 1. The scope. 2. The sense of the words. 3. What it forbids. 4. What it commands: And these follow each upon other; for out of the scope the sense is best gathered, and from that the breach and observation.

As the second commandment concerns the solemn form of divine worship, that it be not such as we devise, but as himself appoints. The third, the qualification or manner of it, not vainly and profanely, but with holy reverence. The fourth, the solemn time set apart for it, the sabbath. So, this first precept aims at somewhat which is previous to all these.

Many distinguish this and the second, *per cultum internum & externum, by the internal and external worship:* and a grave modern divine, espying some defect in that, doth it, *per cultum naturalem & institutum, by natural and institute.* But I confess, both omit, at least they express not (it may be they take it as

implied) that which is mainly intended, The object of worship; that that *Jehovah* that gave, and himself spake this *law*, be received and acknowledged for the only true God, and so the only object of divine worship. And this is that which he calls, *Cultus naturalis*, *natural worship*, that primitive worship, the religious habitude of man to God, giving himself entire, outward and inward, to his service and obedience; for this is no other but to own him, and him only for that *deity*, to whom all love and worship and praise is due.

It is sure not so convenient to restrain this precept to inward worship only, for each precept binds the whole man to obedience; and therefore I would not give the first motions of concupiscence in general, for the sense of the tenth commandment, as we shall show when we come to speak of that. Certainly even outward worship given to a false God, breaks this first commandment.

The scope then is briefly, that the only true God be alone acknowledged for what he is, and (as we are able with all our powers and parts inwardly and outwardly) that he be answerably adored; that we neither change him for any other, nor join any other with him, nor be neglective and slack in honouring and obeying him: so that as we are particularly by each several precept instructed in, and obliged to the particular duties of it, by this we are generally tied to give obedience to them all. It is no way inconvenient, but most fit in this general notion, that this first commandment import the observance of itself, and of all the rest.

II. The sense of the words, *Non habebis*, Heb. *Non erunt tibi*, &c.

1. *Erit tibi Deus*, *Thou shalt have a God.* Know and believe that there is a deity. 2. Seek to know which is the true God, that thou mayest acknowledge him. 3. "Know me as I have revealed myself in my word; know and believe that I *Jehovah*, the au-

thor and deliverer of this *law*, that I am God, and there is none else [k]." 4. "Offer not therefore either to forsake me, or to join any other with me; alienate no part of my due from me, for my glory I will not give unto another." 5. "Take me for thy God; and give service and honour, and thyself unto me."

Before my face.] "Set them not up in my sight, for I cannot suffer them, nor their worshippers; if they come in my sight they will provoke me to anger." The word here for *face*, sometimes signifies anger in scripture; and it seems to allude to his clear manifestation of himself to his people in the delivery of the *law*, and further to clear the doctrine of pure and true religion shining in the *law*, which is, as it were, the light of the face of God: In which regard, the nations that knew him not, may be said not to have their gods before his face; for though he see them, they saw not him. Again, *before my face*, "If thine idolatry be never so secret, though it were but in heart, remember that it will be in my sight; thou canst not steal away any of my glory to bestow any where else, so cunningly and secretly, but I shall espy thee. If thou canst have any other gods that I cannot know of, and see not, thou mayest; but if thou canst have none but I shall see them, then beware, for if I see it, I will punish it."

III. *Breaches* or *sins* against this commandment.

We cannot particularly name all, but some main ones.

1. That *inbred enmity*, that habitual rebellion that is in our natures against God; συμφυὴς ἐχθρα, that *connatural enemy* that takes life with us as soon as ourselves in the womb. Τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς, *the minding of the flesh* [l]; and the evidence of that, οὐκ ὑποτάσσεται, *It cannot be ordered*, is ever breaking rank. Some even of those that bestow mourning upon sin, yet do not often enough consider the bitter fountain, and bewail it. The wisest way to know

[k] Isaiah xliv. 8. [l] Rom. viii. 6.

things, is following them home to their causes. Thus *David*[m], *Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me.*

2. *Atheism.* Though there is in the consciences of all men an indelible conviction of a deity, so that there have been few of those monsters found profest *atheists;* yet there is in us all naturally this of atheism, that by nature we would willingly be rid of that light, and quench that sparkle if we could: And all ungodly men do live contrary to it, and fight against it.

3. *The gross idolatry of the heathens*; their πολυθεοτης, making Gods of beasts, almost of every thing, and beasts of themselves; *Nullus enim terminus in falso.* The writers of the primitive church have mightily and learnedly confuted them: but we will not stir this dunghill. The scripture calls idols so; *Hillulim.*

4. *Witchcraft*, necromancy and magical arts, that make a God of the devil.

5. Rome's *invocation of saints and angels;* though they take never so much pains to clear it they do but wash the blot more. Thus in the same matter[n], *Though thou take thee nitre and much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord.* All their apologies take it not away, let them refine it never so much with pamphlets and distinctions; all they attain by spinning it so fine, is but to make it a part of the mystery of iniquity.

6. *Erroneous opinions concerning God*, and generally heresies in religion.

7. *Practical or interpretative atheism*, or *idolatry*, whether of the two you will call it; for it is both in the lives of the most: and the world is full of this, being such as declares they have no God, or that this God is but some base idol in his stead; particularly amongst ourselves, 1. Gross ignorance of God, and no endeavour to attain the knowledge of him, though in the midst of the light and means

[m] Psalm li. 5. [n] Jer. ii. 22.

of knowing. 2. Universal profaneness flowing from this ignorance[a]. The hearts of men that should be the temples of God, are full of idols; though we hide them in the closest corners, they are before his face, he sees them[b]. Lust, and pride, and covetousness. Consider, That which you bestow most thoughts and service on, that which you are most affectionate and earnest in, is not that your God? And is there not something beside the true God that is thus deep in the hearts of the most of us? Take pains to make the comparison, look upon the temper of your minds; (to say nothing of much more time spent upon other things than on him): how ardent you are in other affairs that you think concern you near, and how cold in serving and honouring him? But, though in particular undergods, in what serves their honour, they differ, all men naturally agree in the great idol, *himself.* Every man is by corrupt nature his own God. Was not this the first wickedness that corrupted our nature? *Ye shall be as Gods;* and it sticks to it still. Men would please themselves, and have themselves somebody, esteemed and honoured; and would have all serve to this end. Is not this God's right and due they give themselves, to be the end of all their own actions, and sacrifice all to their own glory?

IV. *What it commands.*

Now by these we may easily gather the contrary, what is the obedience of this commandment.

Though the graces are duties properly belonging to the commandment, some divines think fit to expatiate into the several common places of them, in explaining this commandment: yet, with all respect to them, I think it not so fit to dwell upon each of these herein; their full handling rather belonging to that place of divinity that treats of the head of sanctification, and those infused habits of which it consists.

[a] Hos. iv. 1, 2, 3. [b] Vide Ezek. viii.

So to know the true God, this *Jehovah*, as to be persuaded sovereignly to love, and fear, and trust in him, to serve and adore him.

He is to be *feared*, for he is great: *Who would not fear thee, thou King of nations!* To be *loved*, for he is good; and because both *great* and *good*, *only* fit to be *wholly* relied on and hoped in.

But love is all, it gives up the heart, and by that all the rest to the party loved; it is no more its own. Oh that we could love him! Did we see him, we would. It is his uncreated beauty that holds glorified spirits still beholding and still delighted; but we, because we know him not, if we have any thoughts of him, how short are they: presently down again, fall to the earth, and into the mire ere we are aware. Therefore,

Set yourselves to know, and love, and worship this God; labour that there may be less of the world, and less of yourselves, and more of God in your hearts; more settled and fixed thoughts of him, and delight in him. Think not that this is only for the learned, or only for some retired contemplative spirits that have nothing else to do; he is the *most High*, and service and honour is due to him from all his creatures; and from his reasonable creatures, reasonable service: and what this is, hear from the apostle, and let his exhortation, or his intreaty persuade you to it, *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice*, (and they are not living without the soul) *holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*[c], and your truest obedience to this commandment.

[c] Rom. xii. 1.

PRECEPT II.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

The first commandment binds us to acknowledge and worship the true God; this, to the true worship of that God.

As God is not known but by his own teaching and revealing himself, so he cannot be rightly worshipped but by his own prescription and appointment.

This is the aim of this second commandment, to bind up man's hands, and his working fancy that sets his hands at work, and to teach him to depend upon divine direction for the rule of divine worship, and to offer him nothing in his service, but what he hath received from him in command. The prohibition is general; *non facies tibi*, thou shalt not devise any thing to thyself in the worship of God: and under that gross device of images, and worshipping them, expresly named, are comprehended all other inventions and will-worship.

There is in the words, 1. The *precept*. 2. The *enforcement* of it.

Precept. 1. *Thou shalt not make*, Thou shalt not imagine, nor invent, nor imitate the invention of others. Thou shalt not make, nor cause to make: in a word, thou shalt be no way accessory to the corrupting of divine worship, with any *resemblance*, or image, or *human device* at all.

The *former* a particular word, signifying the then most usual kind of imagery; but the *other* of a most large and general sense, for all kind of similitude and representation. So that the dispute the church of *Rome* drives us into for her interest in this matter, about εἴδωλον and εἰκων, is not only a mere *logomachy*, a debate about words, but altogether impertinent

and extravagant, having no ground at all in the words of the commandment; the *former* whereof is more particular than either of these two, and the *latter* more general and comprehensive than either they or any one word we have to render it by.

Of the things which are in Heaven, &c.] Because the vain mind of man had wandered up and down the world, and gone through all these places to find objects of idolatry: in Heaven, the sun, and moon, and stars; on the earth not only men, but beasts and creeping things, and fishes in the waters, and made images of them to worship; the Lord is therefore particular in his countermand.

2. The second part of the precept is, concerning their worship, *Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them.*

The former word is more particular, specifying one usual sign of worship, the inclining or bowing of the body. The other general: *Thou shalt not serve them*, i. e. give them no kind nor part of religious worship at all, on whatsoever pretence.

Here again the popish writers make a noise with that distinction, under which they think to shift the censure of idolatry: call it what they will, λατρεύειν, or δουλεύειν, sure it comes under the word in the original, which signifies religious service or worship. Neither can they ever find in all the scriptures, that any thing of that kind should be bestowed lower than upon the majesty of God himself.

This is then the tenor of the commandment. 1. That no image or representation of God be made at all, as is expressed in many other scriptures, as giving the sense of this precept. 2. Nor that any resemblance of any creature be made for a religious use. 3. That neither to any creature, nor to any resemblance or image be given any part of divine worship, although it were with a pretence, yea, and intention of worshipping the true God in and by them; which if it were a sufficient excuse, as the

church of *Rome* dreams it is, certainly the *Israelites* golden calf, and many other the grossest idols have been in the world, might come and find room to shelter under it.

For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.] This follows the other part, the binding on, or enforcing of the precept by threatning and promise annexed. Particularly, there be these *five* things, by which God describes himself here, to persuade obedience to this command, 1. His relation to his people, *Thy God.* 2. His power both to punish and reward. *El. The strong God.* 3. The exact regard he hath to his own glory and zeal, or jealousy for it. *A jealous God.* 4. The certainty and severity of his justice, punishing the transgressors of this his law on themselves and their posterity, *Visiting*, &c. 5. The plenty and riches of his goodness to the obedient, *Shewing mercy*, &c.

This commandment, and the fourth, are longer than the rest, and more backed with argument, because the light of nature discerns less in these than in the rest. The outward manner of the worship of God, and God's exactness in that, to be served not as we will, but as he himself sees fit, and concerning the time of it.

Of the first argument from God's relation to his people before in the preface, here it is repeated, because it suits with the word that follows, *Jealous.* 1. *Thy God;* thy husband by particular covenant, and therefore jealous of thy love and fidelity to me in my worship. 2. *El.* able to right myself upon the mightiest and proudest offender. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy,* (says the apostle) *are we stronger than he*[f]*?* There joining these two together (as here they are) his *strength* and his *jealousy.* 3. *Jealous,* He is the Lord and husband of his people, and idolatry is therefore spiritual adultery; as they are often reproached with it under that name by the prophets[g]. So that by that sin particularly

[f] 1 Cor. x. [g] Jer. iii. 1, &c.

his anger is stirred up against them. The very contract of this marriage with his people we have, Exod. xix. 5. 4. *Visiting*, As judges and magistrates use to visit those places that are under their jurisdiction, to make enquiry after abuses committed in time of their absence, and to punish them[h]. Thus he that is always every where alike present, yet because he doth not speedily punish every sin at the first, therefore when he doth execute judgment in his appointed time, then is he said to visit, and search, and find out that iniquity, which in his time of forbearance, he seemed to the ungodly either not to see, or not to regard.

Of the Fathers.] It is true, the prophet correcting the perverse speech of the people of his time, affirms, *That the Son shall not bear the iniquity of the Father*, &c[i]. to wit, he repenting and returning, and being no way culpable of the like iniquity, which the people then falsely presumed of themselves: but neither is it here said, that the godly children shall suffer for the sin of their ungodly parents or ancestors; but because this sin of idolatry or false worship in any kind, doth as commonly and readily descend to posterity, as any other, and there is scarce any plea for false religion that takes more, *It was the religion of our fore-fathers;* this kind of threatening may possibly for that cause be here particularly suitable.

But sure that is not all that is here intended, that, if the children do continue in the sin of the parents, they shall be punished; but that for so high a transgression as this, he may justly, and often doth in judgment give the children over to the sins of their parents; his grace being free, and so not being bound to his creature to furnish grace, but where he will, they go on in the sin of their fathers, and bring upon themselves further punishment, not only temporal, but spiritual and eternal. It is not necessary for its verifying that it be always so; for God, we

[h] 1 Sam. vii. 16. [i] Ezek. xviii.

know, hath converted many children of ungodly, yea, particularly of idolatrous parents, and shewed them mercy: but, in that he justly may do thus, it is a just threatening; and in that he often doth thus, it is a true threatening, although in mercy he deal otherwise where it pleaseth him.

That hate me.] What! this is so harsh a word, that no body will own it. Not the most dissolute and wicked, not the grossest idolaters. Yet generally the love of sin witnesses against men possest with it, that they are, θεοστυγεῖς, haters of God: and particularly the love of idols and false worship, alienates the soul from God, and turns it to enmity against him. Men seem possibly to themselves in false worship humble and devout[k], but it is to hate and dishonour the divine majesty, to bring to him and force upon him, as it were, in his own presence, in his immediate service, that which is most hateful to him.

Shewing mercy to thousands.] "Blessing them "and their posterity, being their God, and the God "of their Seed."

That love and keep, &c.] "That therefore obey "me, because they love me, and testify they love "me by obeying me." This is a general truth in regard of all the commandments, though more particularly to be applied to this, to which it is annexed. It forbids,

1. Making any image or resemblance of God at all[l]. *Ye saw no manner of similitude*, &c. *To whom will ye liken me*[m]*?*

2. The giving any kind of religious honour and worship to any creature or created resemblance[n]. The reason why men are so propense to both these, is, because they are so much addicted to sense, and their minds are so blinded, that they cannot conceive of the spiritual nature of God. Therefore being driven by conscience to some kind of worship

[k] Col. ii. 18. [l] Deut. iv. 15. [m] Isaiah xl, &c.
[n] Job xxxi. 27. Psalm cxv.

and religion, they incline to have some visible object of it; the soul having lost its sight, leans upon the body, would make it up, and supply it by the eye of sense.

3. All superstition and will-worship, all self-pleasing ceremonies and inventions in the service of God, how pompous and plausible and devout soever they seem to be, instead of decoring, they do indeed deface the native beauty of divine worship; and, as Popish pictures on glass windows, they may seem rich and gay, but they darken the house; they keep out the light of saving truth, and obscure the spiritual part of the service of God.

4. All gross material conceits and apprehensions of God. Other particulars may be reduced to this command; for this and the rest name but the main offences and duties. Then it commands,

1. To learn, and carefully and punctually to observe the prescription of God in every part of his own worship, and diligently to be exercised in it, as in hearing, prayer, sacraments, &c.

2. In worshipping him to have the purest spiritual notion of his majesty that we are able to attain to.

God deals by both, by representing his justice and his mercy to persuade his people to obedience, to drive them by fear of the one, and draw them by the sweetness of the other. Thus pastors are to set both before their people; but as he delights most in the pressing of his mercy, and persuading by that; so certainly it is that, that prevails most with his own children, and doth most kindly melt and mould their hearts to his obedience.

Visit iniquity to thirds and fourths, but shew mercy to thousands that keep my commandments.] Although it be not perfect, yet it is such a keeping as flows from love, and therefore love makes up what is wanting in it; and that is not perfect neither in us here, and therefore mercy makes up what is want-

ing in both. It is not such love and obedience as can plead for reward upon merit, but such as stands in need of mercy, and it is free grace and mercy that rewards it.

Love and keep.] These two are inseparable. No keeping the commandments without love, no love without keeping them. Try then the one by the other, the sincerity of your obedience by examining the spring of it, if it arise from love; and try the reality of your love, if it be active and fruitful in obedience.

You know how studious love is to please, how observant of their will whom it affects, preferring it to their own will, and desirous to have no will but the same; makes hard things easy, and cannot endure to have any thing called difficult to it: much love to God would do this, it would turn all duty into delight. Did we once know what this were, we would say with St. *Austin, What needs threatening and punishment to those that love thee not, is it not punishment enough not to love thee?* If you would have all your obedience sweet and easy to yourselves, and acceptable to God, seek above all things hearts inflamed with his love.

PRECEPT III.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, &c.

The Psalmist stirring up himself to the praises of God[o], calls up his glory to it, *Awake my glory.* By *glory* the *Hebrew* interpreters understand the *soul;* the *septuagint* and others the *tongue:* so the apostle, following the *septuagint,* renders it, from Psalm xv. Acts ii.

It suits well with both: the soul being the better part of man, far excelling the body; and amongst

[o] Psalm lvii. 8.

the parts of the body the tongue having this excellency, to be the organ of speech, and so the interpreter of the mind: and this difference from the beasts, as the soul is, may well partake of its honourable name, and be called *man's glory.*

But that which gives them both best title to that name, is that exercise to which he calls them, the praising and glorifying of their Lord and Maker. Then are they indeed our *glory*, when they are so taken up and employed, when the one conceives, and the other utters his glory.

And as it becomes them always to be one, as they have one name, the soul and the tongue to agree, so especially should this one name given them be answered by their harmony and agreement in his own work, for which chiefly they have that name, in giving glory to God; and it is that which this commandment requires: forbidding that which is the ignominy of man, both of his soul and of his tongue, and degrades them, turns them out of the name of *glory*, to be called *shame* and *dishonour*, that is, irreverence, and dishonouring the glorious name of GOD: and therefore, on the contrary, commanding the reverent and holy use of his name and service; and that we always endeavour so to speak and think of him, and so to walk before him, as those that seek beyond all things that his name may be glorified in us and by us. For though false swearing and vain swearing are main breaches of this commandment, (as we shall shew afterwards) being primely forbidden by it, yet it extends generally to all our speeches concerning God: neither is it to be restrained there, and kept within that compass, as if it gave only law to the tongue; although indeed the tongue hath a very great share in it, both in the breaking and keeping of it, yet certainly the precept in its full sense goes deeper into the soul, and gives a rule to the speech of the mind, our thoughts concerning God; and larger, stretches itself forth to our actions and life, that hath as loud

a voice to those with whom we converse as our tongues, and is the more considerable of the two, giving a truer character of men, what they are indeed, than their words can do.

The first commandment teaches and enjoins whom we shall worship. The second, what worship we shall give him. This third shews us with what disposition and intention, and answerably with what manner of expression we shall worship him, and use his name, that it be not vainly, and after a common trivial manner, but in holiness and humility, and desire of his glory.

So then this commandment concerns particularly that which is the great end of all the works of God, *The glory of his name.* He made all things for himself[p], his works of creation for this end[q], of redemption and new creation of the elect world[r], *All to his praise and glory:* And for this end calls he us from darkness to light, to shew forth his praises or virtues[s], This we are to intend with him, and that this precept requires of us, that what he aimed at in all his works, the same we may intend in all ours: and this is an excellent thing, the holiest and happiest condition, to make God's purpose ours, and have the same end with him. Here it is particularly true, *Summa religionis est imitari quem colis; The main of religion is to imitate him whom we worship.* Thus are we to live, and particularly so to worship him and make mention of his name; that we be ever sensible of its worth and greatness, and so beware that we indignify it not, but always seek to advance the honour and glory of it; and that is the very scope of this commandment.

There is in it, 1. The *precept* itself. 2. The *annexed commination.*

In the *precept*, 1. What his name. 2. To take it. 3. What in vain.

The name.] 1. The names that are given him in scripture, *Jehovah*, *Elohim*, &c. It was a foolish

[p] Prov. xvi. [q] Isaiah xliii. 7. [r] Ephes. i. [s] 1 Pet. ii. 9.

and profane shift of the *Jews*, that thought themselves free, if they abused not the name *Jehovah:* And so they became superstitious in the forbearing that, and licentious in the abuse of the rest; and swearing by other things in heaven and earth, &c. Which therefore our Saviour reproves, giving the true sense of this commandment[t]. And this is the nature of superstition, to make frivolous undue restraints, by way of compensation of that profane liberty and looseness in the commandments of God, which is its usual companion. 2. All the attributes of God, by which the holy scriptures set him forth to us. 3. Generally any thing whatsoever by which God is made known unto us, and distinguished from all others, and by which we make mention of him, which are the uses of a name. In a word, that of *St. Paul* expresseth it fully and fitly, Τὸ γνωὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Thou shalt not take,] that is, Thou shalt not take, or lift up, or bear. 1. Not use it secretly by thyself, or within thyself, in thine own thoughts, without reverence; not take it in vain. So, 2. Not make mention of it, or express it to others vainly; not lift it up in vain. 3. Not bear, not be called by it, or have it called upon thee; not profess it in vain.

In vain.] 1. Falsely and dissimulately. 2. Profanely. 3. Unprofitably, to no purpose. 4. Lightly and inconsiderately, without due regard, and holy fear.

2. The *annexed commination.*

He will not hold him guiltless.] "He will not clear him. The sovereign judge, from whose hand no offender can escape, except he willingly set him free and absolve him, he will not absolve them that abuse his name." And it means further, he will not clear him, that is, he will certainly punish him, and do judgment on him as guilty. And this is the rather particularly here exprest, because men are subject foolishly to promise themselves impunity in this

[t] Matt. v.

sin, think either there remains no guiltiness behind it, but it passes as the words do; or if there be any, yet being but a mutter of words, wherein the most usual and known breach of this command consists, that the guiltiness of them is so small, that any little excuse may wipe it off; that it is but inadvertence, or a bad custom, or some such thing. "No, (says the Lord, the law-giver himself) delude not yourselves, think not the honour and dishonour of my name a light matter; or if you will, yet I will not think it so, nor you shall not find it so; though you easily forgive and clear yourselves, I will not clear you, but will vindicate the glory of my name in your just punishment, which your sin of taking it in vain did abuse and dishonour; and you shall feel in that punishment that you are not guiltless, as you imagined." The name of GOD is great and weighty and honourable, (as the same *Hebrew* word signifies both) and therefore, *qui assumunt vel attollunt,* as the word here is, they that offer to lift up this weighty name lightly and regardlessly, it shall fall upon them, and they shall be crushed under the weight of it.

There are many questions relating to this commandment handled and discussed by divines, as of an oath, a vow, &c. which, for our purposed brevity, we will pass by; and only, according to our usual method, add some chief heads of the violation and observance of this commandment.

1. All false swearing or perjury, which is to take his name after the grossest manner, in vain, or *in mendacium*, as the word likewise signifies; to call truth itself, the first verity, to partake of a lie. But he is not mocked, for as the nature of an oath imports invocating him as the highest both witness and judge of truth, and punisher of falshood, he always in his own due time makes it good on those that dare adventure upon that guiltiness in so high a kind.

2. *Papal* dispensation of oaths, which is a most heinous sin, and becomes him that is eminently called

the man of sin. It is more than perjury, for it is a profest avowed patrociny of perjury, together with an impudent conceit of a privilege and right to do so.

3. Equivocatory oaths, by which, if it were lawful, the grossest perjury might be defended; for there is nothing so false, but some mental reservation may make it true.

4. Abusing the name and word of God to charms and spells.

5. Execration and cursing by the name of Satan, which is no other but invocating him.

6. Swearing by any creature.

7. Abusing and vilifying the glorious and holy name of God, by passionate, or by vain and common customary swearing.

8. Swearing for ends of controversy, and in weighty matters, where an oath is lawful, yea necessary, yet doing it without due reverence, and consideration of the greatness of God, and the nature of an oath.

9. Abusing of the word of God, either wresting it to defence of error, or making sport and jesting with it.

10. Scoffing and taunting at holiness, and the exercises of religion.

11. Dishonouring the religion which we profess, by unworthy and unsuitable carriage of life.

12. Performing prayer, or any other religious exercise, only out of custom, without affection and delight, and holy regard of the presence and majesty of God in his worship. More might be added, which for brevity we omit.

Is it not the highest shame of Christians to take pleasure to vilify and abuse that holy name of God, that saints and angels are blessing above, and which we hope (as we pretend) to bless with them for ever? If any dare offer to excuse it, by provocation or passion, that otherwise use it not; consider what a madness this is, because man hath injured thee, thou

wilt injure God, and be avenged upon his name for it. And you that plead custom, accuse yourselves more deeply; that tells you are guilty of long continuance in, and frequent commission of this horrible sin. Were the fear of God in men's hearts, it would prevail both above their passion and their custom. Did they believe this, that the Lord will not clear in his great day, it would fright them out of their custom. Were there a law made that whosoever were heard swear should be put to death, you would find a way to break your custom: God threatens eternal death, and you fear not, because indeed you believe not.

It commands, generally, the reverent and holy use of the name of God: and particularly, 1. In case of necessity, by advised and religious swearing by his name, and his alone, in judgment, truth, and righteousness. 2. Consider his name often, to take it into our thoughts, to meditate on his glorious attributes, and on his word and works; in both which those attributes shine forth unto us. 3. To delight to make mention of his name upon all fit occasions, and to speak to his glory. 4. To adorn our holy profession of religion with a holy life, with wise and circumspect walking, that it may not be evil spoken of by our means. 5. That our heart and affection be in the service of God which we perform, otherwise (how plausible soever the appearance and outside of it is) it is nothing but guiltiness within, a taking of his name in vain, who will not hold them guiltless that do so. 6. Above all exercises, to delight in the praises of God, which is most properly the exalting and magnifying of his name, the lifting it up on high. The *Psalmist* abounds in commending it; it is *good*, it is *comely*, it is *pleasant:* Oh! that we could resolve with him[u], *I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall be in my mouth continually: My soul shall make her boast in the Lord,* &c. This is, as we can,

[u] Psm. xxxiv. 1, 2.

to bear a part here with glorified Spirits; and a certain privilege to us, that after a few days we shall be admitted into their number.

PRECEPT IV.

Remember to keep holy the Sabbath-day, &c.

Amongst all the visible creatures, it is man's peculiar excllency, that he is capable of considering and worshipping his Maker, and was made for that purpose; yet being composed of the dust of the earth, and the breath of God, a body and a soul, the necessities of that meaner part, while we are in this life, employ as much, and take up a great part of our little time. And in this regard God hath wisely and graciously set a part a day for us, one of each seven to be appropriate to that our highest employment, the contemplating and solemn worshipping of his majesty. This the scope of this precept.

1. The precept itself. 2. The reason of it, and motive to its obedience. The precept itself is first briefly exprest. 2. Further explained and urged.

Remember.] This word used, 1. It seems to reflect upon by-past omission and forgetfulness, for though it was instituted in paradise, and was not now a new unheard of thing to this people, as appears by *Exod.* xvi. 23, yet it is like they were much worn out of the observation and practice of it, especially during the time of their captivity in *Egypt.* So then it is renewed thus, keep holy this day which you know was so long ago appointed to be so, be not now any more unmindful and regardless of it." 2. Such a way of enjoining seems more particularly needful in this than in the rest, because it is not so written in nature as the rest, but depends wholly upon particular institution, which may also be the cause why it is so large, and the form of it alone amongst all the ten, both negative and positive, *Thou shalt do no work* and, *remember to keep it holy.* 3. But the main reason of

this, *remember*, is, the main thing or aim in this precept, as both the badge, and the preserver and increaser of all piety and religion. And therefore is it, that it is so often prest in the books of the law, and sermons of the prophets to the people of God, and so often called a sign of God's covenant with them, and their mark of distinction from all other people[h].

The Sabbath-day.] It is called a day of rest, from the beginning and original of its institution, God's rest; and from the end of its institution, man's rest; both which follow in the words of the command: the one is the example and enforcing reason of the other.

That thou keep holy.] God sanctified it by instituting it, and man sanctified it by observing it according to that institution.

This sanctifying is, 1. In cessation from earthly labour. 2. In their stead to be wholly possest and taken up with spiritual exercise, both in private and in publick. The former is necessary for the being of the latter, that cessation for this work; and the latter is necessary for the due being of the former; we cannot be vacant and entire for spiritual service unless we cease from bodily labour, and this cessation or resting from bodily labour, cannot be a sanctifying of this day unto God, unless it be accompanied with spiritual exercise.

In the following words, that part is only exprest, the rest or abstinency from work; but the other is supposed as the end of this, that they shall not do their own works, that they may attend upon God's, his solemn worship. And that is implied in that word, *It is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God,* both of his own appointing, and for this end this work, that he may be more solemnly worshipped. And likewise the *antithesis* that seems to be in that word, *In six days thou shalt do all thy work*, imports, that on the seventh thou shalt do God's: not so called, that any benefit arises to him by our service; no,

[h] Exod. xxiii. 12, and xxxi. 13, 14. Levit. xix. 30, 25, 2, &c. Jer. xvii. Isaiah lviii. 13, 14, &c.

Our goodness reaches him not at all. That way, that worship that is far above ours, that of the angels, can add nothing to him, for he is infinite. Even this work, Sabbath's work, and all our prayers and praises offered to him, and all performances of his worship, they are our works in respect of the gain and advantage of them, it comes all back to us. But his worship is his work objectively, he is the object of it, and directively by particular prescription from himself; and, if you will add effectively too, never done aright but by his own grace and assistance.

Six days shalt thou labour, &c.] The command of due labour and diligence in our particular callings, is not of this place, it belongs properly to the eighth precept, and some way to the seventh; here it is only mentioned premissively, and for illustration of this duty here enjoined. And further, there is under it a motive from abundant equity, seeing God hath made the proportion thus, not pinched to us, but dealt very liberally in the time granted for our own work; what gross, not impiety only, but iniquity and ingratitude will it be, to encroach upon that small part he hath nominated and set apart for his service? This was a great aggravation of our first parents first sin, that having the free use of all the trees in the garden besides, they would not bate that one that was forbidden them, in homage and obedience to him that had given them all the rest, and given them themelves, who a little before were nothing.

Thou shalt labour.] Not so as in them to forget and take no notice of God, not at all to call upon him and worship him, and think to acquit all by some kind of attendance on him on the sabbath. They that do so are most unsanctified themselves, and therefore cannot sanctify the Sabbath to God. Such profane persons do profane and pollute all they touch with their foul hands, for such be all profane hands lift up to God in prayer. The life of the Godly is

not a visiting of God only in his house on this day, but a daily and constant walking with God in our own houses, and in all our ways, making both our houses and our hearts, his houses, his temples, where he may dwell with us, and we may offer him our daily sacrifices.

Only the peculiar of this day is, that we may not divide it betwixt heaven and earth, but it shall be wholly for the service of God, and no work at all to have place in it that may hinder that, and suits not with the sanctifying of it; for so we are to understand the word, *No manner of work.*

Neither thou nor thy servant, &c.] As each one is obliged personally, so they that have command of others, are bound to bind them to observance, and the cattle to rest, because their labour is for man's use, and therefore his resting infers theirs; as likewise their rest is for a passive conformity, that man may see nothing round about him, but what may incite to the observance of this day; which was the reason, in solemn fasts, of the beasts fasting likewise, for man's further humiliation. The *stranger*, if converted and professing their religion, the same reason for him, as for all others within a man's house; and if a stranger to their religion too, yet they might and ought, as here is commanded, oblige him to this part of outward conformity, cessation from work, which otherwise would be an offensive and scandalous sight; and withal if they did any work for those with whom they dwell, their share would be deeper in the sin, than of such a stranger, not professing their religion.

For in six days.] It is not pertinent here to speak of the reason of this, why God made six days work of that, which he could have done in one instant; here it is only urged exemplarily, as the reason why God did sanctify this day, and why we should sanctify it. His rest you know is not of weariness, or at all of ceasing from motion; *For he faints not, neither is wearied*, as he tells us by the prophet; yea,

he moves not at all in working, *Omnia movet ipse i motus.* But this rest is this, that this was the c that immediately followed the perfecting of the cr tion; and therefore God blest it with this privile (that is the blessing of it) that it should be to n holy, for the contemplation of God and of his wor and for solemn worship to be performed to him.

All the other precepts of this law remaining full force in their proper sense, it cannot but be injury done to this command, either flatly to refu it that privilege; or, which is little better, to ev porate it into allegories. Nor was the day abolis ed as a typical ceremony, but that seventh on changed to a seventh still, and the very next to i He that is Lord of the Sabbath, either himself imm diately, or by his authority in his apostles, appoin ing that day of his resurrection for our sabbati adding to the remembrance of the first creation, th memorial of accomplishing the new creation, th work of our redemption, which appeared then ma nifestly to be perfected, when our Redeemer brok the chains of death, and arose from the grave, h that is the light of the new world, shining fort anew the same day that light was made in the fo mer creation. This day was *St. John* in the Spiri taken up with those extraordinary revelations[h]. The were extraordinary indeed; and certainly every Chris tian ought to be in the Spirit in holy meditations an exercises on this day more than the rest, winding u his soul, that the body poises downwards, to a highe degree of heavenliness, to be particularly careful t bring a humble heart to speak to God in prayer, an hear him in his word; a heart breathing after him longing to meet with himself in his ordinances. An certainly it is safer and sweeter to be thus affecte towards the Lord's day, than to be much busie about the debate of the change.

The very life of religion doth much depend upo the solemn observation of this day: consider but, i

[h] Apoc. i. 10.

we should intermit the keeping of it for one year, to what a height profaneness would rise in those that fear not God, which yet are restrained (though not converted) by the preaching of the word, and their outward partaking of public worship; yea, those that are most spiritual, would find themselves losers by the intermission.

What forbidden.—1. Bodily labour on this day, where necessity unavoidable, or piety commands not. 2. Sporting and pastimes *. This is not to make it a sabbath to God, but to our lusts, and to Satan; and hath a stronger antipathy with the worship of God, and that temper of mind they intend in it, than the hardest labour. 3. Resting from these, but withal, resting from the proper work of this day, neglecting the worship of God in the assemblies of his people; the beasts can keep it thus, as we see in the precept. 4. Resorting to the public worship of God, but in a customary cold way, without affection and spiritual delight in it. 5. Spending the remainder of the day incongruously, in vain visits and discourses, &c.

How observed.—1. By pious remembrance of it, and preparation, sequestring not only the body from the labour, but our souls from the cares and other vain thoughts of the world. 2. Attending upon the public worship of God willingly and heartily, as the joy and refreshment of our souls [k]. 3. Spending the remainder of it in private holily, as much as may be, in meditation of the word preached, and conference, in prayer, reading, and meditating on the great works of God, of creation, redemption, &c.

This is the loveliest brightest day in all the week to a spiritual mind; these rests refresh the soul in God, that finds nothing but turmoil in the creature. Should not this day be welcome to the soul, that sets it free to mind its own business, which is on other days to attend the business of its servant, the body? And these are a certain pledge to it of that expected

* Sabb. vituli aurei. [k] Isa. lviii. Psm. cxxii.

freedom, when it shall enter to an eternal sabba and rest in him for ever, who is the only rest of t soul

PRECEPT V.

Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days m be long in the land which the Lord thy God give thee.

The renewed image of God in man, or the ne man, is made up of holiness and righteousness These two are that of which the whole law of Gc is the rule: the first table, the rule of holiness piety towards God: the second, of righteousness equity towards men. And of the commandmen that concern this, the first aims at the preserving that order which God hath appointed in the sever relations of superiors and inferiors; that is the scop of this fifth commandment.

Daily experience teacheth us how needful this is that God give a particular precept concerning this in that we see how few there are that know aright either how to command and bear rule as superiors or as inferiors to obey and be subject: And there i one evil very natural to men that misleads them ir both, pride and self-opinion, which often make superiors affect excess in commanding, and inferior defective in due obedience.

Order.—It hath the first place in the second table. 1. As being the rule of order and society amongst men, which is needful for the better observing of all the rest; and in all authority there is a particular resemblance of God, and therefore fitly placed next to those precepts that contain our duty to himself. He is pleased to use that interchange of names with superiors that testifies this resemblance, not

[a] Ephes. iv. 24.

only to take theirs to himself, to be called a *father*, a *master*, or *king*, &c. but to communicate his own name to them, and call them *Gods*. And where the apostle speaks of God as the *Father of Spirits*, he draws a reason from that obedience we owe to the fathers of our flesh, as the subordinate causes of our being*.

1. The *precept*. 2. The *promise*. And it is called by the apostle, *the first commandment with promise*: For the last clause of the second commandment, though it imply a promise, (yet as is usually observed) it is general to the keeping of all the commandments; whereas this is appropriate. But again, it is a promise of a mercy in general, this of one particular blessing. 3. It is not formally a promise, though it implies one indeed, and is intended so; but it is set down by way of description of God, from his mercy and bounty to those that keep his precepts; as the clause foregoing it, expresses his justice in punishing the rebellious.

Honour.] Under this is comprehended whatsoever is due to superiors, by virtue of that their station and relation to us; inward respective thoughts and esteem of them, and outward expression, and signifying of it by the usual signs of honour, and by obedience and gratitude, &c.

Thy Father, &c.] This relation is named for all the rest, as being the first and most natural. 2. The sweetest and most affectionate superiority; and therefore the fittest to regulate the command of superiors, and to persuade inferiors to obedience. Magistrates are fathers for mens civil good in their societies, and dwelling together; ministers, fathers for their spiritual good and society as christians.

That thy days may be long, &c.] That it is said, *which the Lord thy God shall give thee*, is peculiar to that people to whom this law was first delivered; but the substance of the promise being common, extends to all with the precept.

* Πρῶτα Θεὸν τίμα μετεπειτα δὲ σεῖο γονῆας. PHOCILL.

This blessing of length of days, is particular fit for the duty; that they who honour their paren who are the second causes of their life, shall l blessed with long life.

This, as all other promises of temporal things, ever to be taken with that condition, without whic they might change their quality, and prove rath punishments; but God always bestows them on h own, and therefore ought to be understood so t promise them, in so far as they are fit for them, an may be truly good in their particular enjoymen and as they conduce to a greater good.

It forbids.—1. All disobedience in inferiors to th just commands of those that God hath placed i authority above them: stubbornness and rebellio in children against their parents, or despising an disesteem of them for their meanness in body, o mind, or estate. The precept is not, "Honour th parents for their riches, or wisdom, or comeliness; But, "Honour them as thy parents, and becaus they are so." Against this command is all othe disobedience, or refractoriness of those that ow obedience; wives to their husbands, servants to thei masters, people to their pastors, &c.

2. Superiors break it, when they abuse their au thority to serve their pride; their screwing it toc high is very unpleasant, a particular dishonour tc God, and defaces the resemblance they have of him; spoils their harmony, as a string too high wound up: and besides that, it is very dangerous, being the ready way to break it. As in magistracy and public government, tyranny is most observable, there is petty tyranny in masters and parents, &c. in extreme harshness and bitterness, &c. μὴ πικραίνετε, says the apostle, &c. Again, when superiors walk unworthily, and so divest themselves of that honour which belongs to them.

It commands,—First, That children give due respect and obedience to their parents; and all that are subject to the authority of others, though they

have not suitable deserving, give it to their station, in obedience to God who commands; for though they, personally considered, do not, yet certainly God deserves our obedience. And it is so much the purer to him, when other incitements failing, yet we observe that which fails not at all. All obedience to men is limited thus, that it be in the Lord, and with regard to his supremacy; and therefore no authority can oblige to the obedience of any command that crosses his. Authority is primitively and originally in God, and he gives not his glory to another; he gives not away any of his peculiar authority to man, but substitutes him: and our first tie is to God, as his creatures, and this is universal; the greatest kings are his vassals, and owe him homage, and no authority derived from him can free us from that which we owe to himself. There is a strait line of subordination, and if superiors leave this, we are to adhere to it, looking directly to God, keeping our station. Some of the schoolmen think that the inferior angels therefore fell with the chief in the apostacy, because they looked so much upon him, that they considered him not in subordination to God, and so left their station, as the apostle speaks.

Secondly, The duty of all superiors is, 1. To consider that their higher station is not for themselves, and for their own advantage, but for those that are in subjection to them; as the stars are set in the highest place, but are for the benefit of the inferior world, by their light, and heat, and influence. *Let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven, to give light upon the earth*[b]. 2. Let them always remember to command in God, and for him; to prefer his honour to their own, seeing he gives command concerning theirs, that they make it serviceable for the advancing of his; for to this purpose hath he given them authority, and given command that they be honoured: and his

[b] Gen. i. 15.

promise is to *honour those that honour him, they that despise him shall be despised.* This m superiors have felt, because they would not bel it, and take notice of it.

Would parents teach their children to k God, and honour and obey him, this were surest and most effectual way to make them dient children to them: if they teach them to o God, you see he commands them to obey t parents; and therefore in obedience to him t will do so.

PRECEPT VI.

Thou shalt not kill: or, *Thou shalt do no murd*

The world was at first perfect harmony, but made the breach at which discord entered, enm betwixt God and man, and enmity betwixt man a man. As the sin that hath poisoned man's natu makes him a rebel to God, so it makes them tyg and wolves one to another: and that same serpe that at first envenomed our nature, doth still hiss wretched man, both to disobedience against Go and enmity and cruelty against one another. V see, how soon this evil followed upon the forme the first parents disobeyed God, and the first chi dren, the one killed the other. In opposition this evil, God hath given this to be one of his te precepts, *Thou shalt not kill.*

Having given a rule touching the particular r lations of men; the following commandments of th second table concern the general duties of all me one to another; and this sixth regardeth his bein or life.

Not kill.] This ties not up the sword of justice which is in the magistrate's hand, from punishin offenders, even with death those that deserve it but rather calls for the use of it, *not being to b*

carried in vain, as the Apostle says; not a gilt sword only for shew, but to be drawn and weilded for the execution of justice; both that, in the just punishnent of sin, Κόλασις, the sinner may eat of the fruit of his own ways, and so God the supreme judge and fountain of justice may be honoured, Τιμωρια, and that by that example, Παραδειγμα, others may be terrified from the like offences. And thus, just killing by the sword of the magistrate, is a main means of the observing this commandment amongst men, *Thou shalt not kill.*

By the like reason is just war likewise freed from the breach of this commandment. But,

The scope of the precept being the preservation and safety of the life of man, and guarding it from violence, it is evident that all injury to our neighbour's life, our own not excluded, is *forbidden.* And not only the heinous fault of murder, which human laws do punish, but all the seeds and beginnings of this sin in the heart, to which principally, as the fountain of our actions, the spiritual law of God is given, as the authentic interpretation of our Saviour teacheth, *Matt.* v. and particularly touching this commandment, *ver.* 21, &c.

1. All fixed hatred of our brethren is forbidden, as the highest degree of heart-murder. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart*[p]. And *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer*[q]; and he adds, that *ye know that no murderer hath life eternal abiding in him.* So then, he is in a woeful deadly condition in whose heart this hatred dwells.

This is an infernal kind of fire, like your fires under ground, that cannot be quenched; so far is it from the temper of any truly spiritual and heavenly mind to be subject to it. There is not any thing more contrary to the spirit of God, and the work of his grace, than the spirit of malice, although it never break forth to revenge; yet if the heart rejoice when evil befals those it dislikes, although it

[p] Levit. xix. [q] 1 John iii. 15.

come from another hand, yet God accounts it, he, that is glad at it, had inflicted it, and been worker of it. Therefore *Job* protests thus, *I'ha rejoiced not at the destruction of him that h him, nor lift up his soul when evil found him*[r].

2. Rash anger, either that which is altoge without just cause, or upon some just cause ar to an undue measure. And is not this the ordin disease of the greatest part and habitual bitter of spirit, that is put out of its seat, and troub with every trifling cause, peevishly stirred up w the shadow and imagination of a wrong, where n is done?

3. The vent of these passions of envy and hatr or sudden rash anger, by railings and strife a bitter speaking, by scoffs and taunts, by whisp ings and detraction, which are the common ex cise of base and unworthy spirits.

This commandment *requires*, that to the avoidi and forbearance of all injury to the life of o neighbour, we add a charitable disposition and d sire of preserving it, and do accordingly act th charity to our utmost power to the good and con fort of his life; using towards him meekness an patience, clemency and beneficence, doing hi good, supplying his wants, as we are able: for it cruelty to the life of our poor brethren, to be straigh handed towards them in the day of their necessit and our abundance, at least of our comparativel better estate[s].

But we think we do much this way, when upo right trial we would find ourselves exceeding de fective; we look upon our few and petty acts o charity with a multiplying glass, and see one as i were ten. Who almost are there, that will draw somewhat from their excesses, to turn into this channel? that will abate a lace from their garment, or a dish from their table, to bestow upon the necessities of the poor? In a word, we ought not only

[r] Job. xli. 29. [s] 1 John iii.

to be free from hurting, but be *a tree of life to our neighbour.*

Let us then be convinced of our guiltiness in breach of this precept. Men think it much if they can forgive, upon acknowledgment and submission of those that have injured them; but they aspire not to this, cordially to forgive those that still continue to wrong and provoke them, to compassionate them, and pray for them, and repay all their evil with meekness and good-will.

We consider not how sublime the rule of Christianity is, and how low our spirits are, and how far off from it. *Be not overcome of evil,* (says the Apostle) *but overcome evil with good*[t]. It is easy to overcome a man that resists not, but yields; to pardon injury when it ceaseth, and intreats pardon: but when it holds out, and is so stout as still to fight against that goodness and meekness that it meets withal, yet the Christian ought to persist in these, and overcome it with good. And see our Saviour's rule to them that will be his disciples[u], against hatred and wrath. Labour for humble spirits. Pride is the spring of malice, and desire of revenge, and of rash anger and contention. This makes men easily swell against any thing that crosses them, because they have laid down this with themselves, that they deserve to be observed and respected, and not crossed at all; and when they find it otherwise, it kindles them to anger: and it is not the degree of provocation, but the different temper of men's spirits makes them more or less subject to anger. It matters not how great the fire be, but where it falls.

Consider first, that these turbulent passions carry their punishment along with them; they rankle and fester the soul, and fill it full of pain and disturbance; whereas the spirit of meekness makes the soul of a Christian like the highest region of the air, constantly calm and serene: the apostle speaking of this commandment of love, says, *That the command-*

[t] Rom. xii. [u] Matt. v.

ments of God are not grievous. Certainly ther such a true pleasure in meekness, forgiving of juries, and loving our very enemies, that did n know it, they would chuse it for the very delight a sweetness of it, though there were no command enforce it.

2. Consider, particularly against rash anger, h weak and foolish a thing it is, *Anger resteth in bosom of fools*, saith *Solomon*. A fool's breast is very natural place of anger, where it dwells. B as he says elsewhere, *A man of understanding is an excellent spirit*[x], the word is, a *cool spirit*. Wh a senseless mistake is it for men to think it streng and greatness of spirit to bear nothing, to be sen ble of every touch and stand upon their punctilio' Is it not evident weakness to be able to suffer n thing? We see the weakest persons most subject anger, women, children, and the sick, and ag persons; old age being both a continued sickness, a a childishness, as they call it, and as the dregs man's life turned into vinegar: it is the weakness all these that makes them fretful*. In a word, it *the glory of a man to pass by a transgressio* every one can be angry, and most are they that a weakest; but to be above it, and have it under con mand, is the advantage of those that are truly wis and therefore worthy of our study to attain it.

3. That which should most prevail with Christian to study love and meekness of spirit, and a propen sion to do good to all, is the conformity that is i this temper to our head and Redeemer Jesus Chris to partake of his dove-like Spirit, *Learn of me* (say he) *for I am meek and lowly in heart*[y]. And thi he hath given as the commission and badge of hi disciples, that as he loved them, so they love on another.

[x] Prov. xvii. 9.

* Εἰς ὀξυ τρέπεται τῦτο τὸ γειπόμενον. Omne infirmum natura que rulum.

[y] Gal v. 20—23.

PRECEPT VII.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

As the preverseness of nature hath found out crooked ways, and sinful abuses of things that we enjoy and use; the holy law of God aims at the rectifying these abuses, and abounding and limiting our ways by a strait rule.

And this precept particularly bars us from all sinful uncleanness, under the name of one kind of it.

That answerably to our condition or estate of life, whatsoever it is, single, or married, we ought to endeavour that cleanness, and purity of soul and body, that becomes the temples of the Holy Ghost.

I purpose not to reckon up particularly the several sorts and degrees of sin of this kind; for chastity is a delicate tender grace, and can scarce endure the much naming of itself, far less of those things that are so contrary to it; though in the law of God, given to the people of the *Jews*, there is express mention of the gross abominations of this kind, because practised by the *Gentiles*, and to be forbidden them. And though the apostle, writing to the *Gentiles* newly converted from those abominations, of necessity mentions particulars of them; yet, further than that necessity of reproving them, where they are in custom requires, he hates the very naming of them[p]. As the old *Roman* satirists, while they seem to reprove vice, rather teach it by their impudent descriptions of it; the new *Roman* casuists, some of them, are as foul that way.

It may suffice to regulate us in this, if we believe this truth, that whatsoever is in this kind, beside the lawful use of marriage, is a breach of this holy law of God, whether it be in action or in words, or so much as in thought. And if this be true, (as it is, if we believe truth itself, our Saviour's inter-

[p] Ephes. v. 3. 12.

pretation) that an unchaste look, or thought, a man guilty, then sure whatsoever is beyond t is more grossly sinful.

What a shameful thing is it, that our holy pr sion of religion should be so dishonoured by abounding of uncleanness amongst us? In mar breaks forth scandalously; and if there be any live in that way of wickedness undiscovered, walk secretly in it; yet the pure Lord who perf sees and hates it, will call them to account, and j them, according to the apostle's word[k]. Cons this likewise, any of you that have not lame your former impure conversation, but being refor outwardly by your years, or condition of life, never have inwardly repented, and been deeply h bled for the sins of your youth. True conversio not so light a work: *David*[l] remembers his mer sins, and prays earnestly that God would not member them against him: and on the contrary, that think not on them, may justly fear that will remember them, because you yourselves h forgot them.

They that give their tongues the liberty of sc rilous jesting, and impure speeches, cannot but h filthy hearts, their noisome breath argues rottenn within.

Yea they that proceed no further in uncleann than to entertain and lodge the fancies or thoug of it, rolling them in their beds, and delighting them, even such are exceeding guilty and abom able in the sight of God, who doth not only see to the heart, but most of all eyes and regards *Keep thy heart above all keeping*, says *Solomon, from thence are the issues of life.* Certainly, th that can dispense with themselves in these inwa heart uncleannesses, and find no remorse, cann think the Spirit of God dwells within them; for he were there, he would be shewing his discontei

[k] Heb. xiii. 4. [l] Psm. xxv.

and anger against that unholiness, which is so contrary to him.

And this they that have any truth of grace will find, that if they be not either free from the assaults, or at least those filthy birds, such impure thoughts be not perfectly beaten away, when they light on the soul, if they stay but any time with them, although they afterwards do chase them out with indignation; yet they do leave such a stain, as grieves and saddens the holy Spirit in them, and for a time they find it not act in prayer, and in spiritual comfort so chearfully as before. *Let no corrupt* (or rotten) *communication proceed out of your mouth,* says the apostle, *and grieve not the holy Spirit:* rotten speech grieves the holy Spirit, and so do such thoughts too, which are a man's speech with himself; and therefore being most familiar and frequent with him, ought to be most regarded, and watched over. There is not any thing will more readily dry up the sweetness and spiritual moisture of the soul, and cause the graces in it to wither, than the impure fire of lust; therefore you that have any beginnings of grace, and would have it flourish, beware of this, and quench it in its first sparkles; if you do not, it may in a little time rise above your power, and still prove very dangerous.

If you would be freed from the danger and importunity of this evil, make use of these usual and very useful rules. 1. To be sober and temperate in diet, withdraw fuel. 2. Be modest and circumspect in your carriage, guard your ears, and eyes, and watch over all your deportment, beware of undue and dangerous familiarities with any, upon what pretence soever. 3. Be choice in your society, for there is much in that. 4. In general, fly all occasions and incentives to uncleanness; but truly the solid care must begin within, otherwise all these outward remedies will prove but *empiric* medicines, as they call them.

1. First then, lean not upon moral resolves and

particular purposes against uncleanness, but seek a total entire change of the heart, and to find the sanctifying spirit of grace dwelling within you.

2. Labour to have the heart possest with a deep apprehension of the holiness and purity of God, and then of his presence and eye upon all thy actions, yea thy most secret thoughts. His eye is more piercing than that any wickedness can be hid from him, and more pure than to behold it without indignation. The darkness is as noon-day to him. I cannot steal a thought out of his sight, though it be never so sudden and short. Then think, "If I pretend to communion and converse with my God, he is all holiness, therefore uncleanness can never attain that to which I aspire: What communion hath light with darkness, or Christ with *Belial*, and shall I lose or hazard the sweetness of his presence for so base a delight? How can I offer that heart to him in prayer, that hath been wallowing in the mire of unclean practice or imagination?" Resolve to drive out the assaults that you are incident to: "How shall I do, or think thus? My holy God is looking on me." This was *Joseph's* preservation, *Shall I do this evil and sin against God?*

3. Acquaint yourselves with spiritual delights, and this will make a happy diversion from those that are sensual and earthly. Somewhat a man must have to delight in. It is the philosopher's remark, that they that know not the true pleasure of the mind, turn to the base pleasures of the body.

Some moral men seeking higher the delight of the mind, in their way have persuaded themselves to a generous disdain of their bodies? How much more powerfully may supernatural delights of the soul, righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, wean it from those gross sensual pleasures, that the beasts have in common with us, at least from the immoderate desire, and all unlawful pursuit of them. Nothing indignifies the soul more than lust. When *David* had sinned this way it had so made havock

of grace within him, that he cries not only for cleansing, but for a new creation, as if all were undone, *Create in me a clean heart*[q], &c. and found it so slavish and ignoble a sin, that he prays to be re-established by God with a free or noble Spirit.

4. Increase in the love of Christ; for as that grows, there is a decrease of the love of sin, yea, of the immoderate love of all inferior things: as the sun-beams eat out the fire, this divine and heavenly love consumes the other. All our love is too scarce or poor for him, when it is recollected and drawn altogether to run only towards him; and therefore there is none to spare upon the flesh, and the lusts of it, nor upon any creature, but as he allows and appoints: the sense of his love takes up the whole soul, and he lodging in it, is that true *Agnus castus* that makes it chaste, that bundle of myrrh that hath a virtue to preserve the Christian from the corruptions of lust.

That love of Jesus Christ is strong as death, kills all opposite affections; and indeed it alone is worthy of the soul, the noble immortal soul. Oh how is it abased when it is drawn down to sensuality, and so made a slave to its servant the flesh! *Major sum & ad majora genitus* (could a *Roman* philosopher say) *quàm ut sim mancipium mei corporis, I am greater, and born to greater things than to be a slave to my body.* How unworthy is it, that being capable of the highest good, the fruition of God, we should forget ourselves so far as to serve vile lust, and forfeit the happiness and pleasures of eternity? Far be it from us, God hath called us to *holiness*, and not to *uncleanness*, says the apostle.

Fly all unlawful and forbidden delights; and those that are lawful, do not engage your hearts to them, love them not immoderately: and they can scarce be loved without excess, if loved at all. Shall I say then, if you use them yet love them not, reserve that for purer enjoyments? Says not the apostle

[q] Psm. li.

this, *Let them that rejoice, be as if they rejoiced not*; and particularly, *They that marry, as if they married not?* And his reason is weighty, *For the fashion of this world passeth away*, &c.

Remember to what a pure and excellent condition we are called as Christians, and with what a price we are bought to be holy; and let it be our firm purpose and study to glorify God in our souls and bodies, for they are his.

PRECEPT VIII.

Thou shalt not steal.

God is the God of order, and not of confusion: it is he that hath authorized and appointed peculiarity of possessions unto men, and withal that society and commerce amongst them that serves for their mutual good; and property reserved makes one man in what he possesses useful and helpful to another: and hath given this precept of his law, to regulate them in these things, to be the rule of that which we call *contentation* or *justice*, equity towards our neighbour, in matter of his goods or proper possessions.

This then being the scope of the commandment, whatsoever breaks this hedge, is, as comprehended under the name of *theft*, here forbidden. All manner of injustice and wrong done to our neighbour in his estate, whether by violence, or by sleight of hand, by force or fraud, yea if it be but so much as in affection or desire; for (as we have often said) the law is spiritual, and binds not only the hands but the heart.

So then, not only gross robberies and thefts are here forbidden, but all oppression and extortion in superiors, all purloining and unfaithfulness in inferiors; too strict exaction in masters, and slothfulness in servants, or whatsoever else may tend to their master's damage; all bribery and receiving of

gifts, to the perverting of justice; all deceit and over-reaching in commerce, or trading, or bargaining; taking advantage in buying or selling, or any contract, upon the ignorance or simplicity of those we deal withal; all desire and seeking of our neighbour's loss to our gain; all the degrees of sacrilege and simony; all idleness and neglect in men's particular callings, by which they either impoverish themselves, and are worse than infidels, not providing for their families; or, if they have certain provision by their callings, in neglecting the duties of them, they wrong those from whom, or for whose sakes they are so provided, as magistrates and ministers, who have or should have honourable maintenance for their public service, the one in the common-wealth, the other in the church: as it is a great sin to curtail or detain what is due that way, so it is no less wickedness in them, if they be remiss and careless of those duties to which they are obliged for the public good. In a word, whosoever can digest any kind of undue gain to themselves, or do any prejudice to their neighbour in the least, are guilty; yea, they sin against this precept that do not with all their power further the advantage and good of their neighbour in his outward condition, that do not help and relieve those they see in want, so far as their ability reaches.

There is a kind of right that the poor have to supply; it is not merely arbitrary to you. Though they have not such a right as to take it at their own hand, or to seek it at the houses of human justice, yet they have such a right as that your hand ought not to detain it. *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due*[r], which is evidently meant (and interpreters take it so) of all kind of doing good, even that of charity and beneficence to the needy, as appears by the following clause, *when it is in the power of thine hand to do it*, and the *Septuagint* ὑποιεῖν τὸν ἐνδεῆ. It is due, they have a right to it,

[r] Prov. iii. 27.

though not such as they can implead for before courts or judicatures, yet in the court of consci and in the sight of God, it is duly theirs; the is, *From him that is Lord of it. It is the bre the hungry that moulds by thee, and the dri the thirsty that sowers by thee**. Although art in possession, hast superfluity by thee, wh wants is his by right, he is Lord of it; for the of all hath turned over his right to thy poor bro The Lord himself needs it not; thy goodness ca reach him; he hath furnished thee with such as it, and may be his receivers, and have warrant him to take it up in his stead: and be sure he acknowledge the receipt of it; thou hast his word and writ for it, a bill of exchange under his hand, that what you give to the poor be put u his accounts. *He that giveth to the poor len to the Lord, and he will repay it:* and again, *that you did it unto one of these,* says our Savi *ye did it unto me.* It is the surest and most las part of a man's estate that is put into their ha if God be *solvendo,* if he be a sufficient debtc It is treasure laid up in heaven.

So then this precept requires uprightness equity in all our dealings, a desire to right and vantage our brethren as ourselves, willing their g and prosperity as our own; diligence and indus in our callings, and giving to all others their d Though men are not obliged to a sottish simplici but ought to endeavour so to understand their fairs, that they may avoid circumvention by oth craft; yet a prudent simplicity is the right stamp a Christian mind, to be single and ingenuous, a rather to suffer loss from others, than cause th any. In a word, the apostle's rule is express and ful *That no man over-reach or defraud his brother*

* Esurientium panis est qui apud te mucescit, & sitientium tus qui apud te acescit. AMBR.

† Quas dederis solas semper habebis opes.

‡ 1 Thess. iv. 16.

any matter, and he adds a very forcible reason, *because the Lord is the avenger of all such; as we have also* (says he) *forewarned you and testified.* Men are ready to find out poor shifts to deceive themselves, when they have some way deceived their brother; and to stop the mouth of their own conscience with some quibble, and some slight excuse, and force themselves at length to believe they have done no wrong: therefore the apostle, to fright them out of their shifts, sets before them an exacter judge, that cannot be deceived nor mocked, that shall one day unvail the conscience, and blow away these vain self excuses as smoke; and that just Lord will punish all injustice, *He is the avenger of all such.*

At the first view a man would think the breach of this commandment concerns but few persons, some thieves and robbers, and some profest deceivers, or if you add some couzening tradesmen and merchants; but the truth is, there is scarce any of the commandments so universally and frequently broken, and whereof the breach is so little observed, and therefore so seldom repented of by the greatest part. As the Apostle *James* says, *He is a perfect man that offends not in his words;* truly he is a rare man that offends not, and that remarkably, if men would remark themselves, against this commandment, *Thou shalt not steal.*

To say nothing of the oppression and hard exactions of such as are superiors of lands, grinding the faces of the poor, and squeezing them till the blood come: and so putting in the same blood of the poor amongst their estates, that many times proves a canker to all the rest; and the thievishness of servants, and of the poorer sort, making no conscience at all of whatsoever they can filch from their masters, or those that are richer than they, counting all they can snatch good booty and lawful prize: To pass by likewise the particular deceits that are usual in several callings, and are incorporate with them through

long custom, and become a part of the mystery of those callings, and therefore men dispense with themselves in them, as the inseparable sin of their calling, and have no remorse for them: not to insist on these and such like, consider how frequently this *meum & tuum, mine and thine*, proves the apple of strife betwixt the nearest friends, and divides their affections, and begets debates amongst them; parents, and children, and brethren, *&c.* And certainly there is always some unjust desire on one side in those contentions, and sometimes on both sides. How few are there that have hearts so weaned from the world, as in all things to prefer the smallest point of equity to the greatest temptation of gain? that in their affairs, and all that concerns them, are universally careful to deal with an even hand, and even heart; and to keep close to that golden rule drawn in nature, but almost lost and smothered in the rubbish and corruption of nature, but drawn anew by our Saviour's hand, not only in his gospel, but in the hearts of his real followers, *That which thou wouldst have others do to thee, do thou unto them:* that when they have any thing to transact, wherein is their brother's interest and their own, do in their thoughts change places with him, set him in their own room, and themselves in his, and deal with him after that manner; that think, "What would I be willing to have done to me were I he, that same will I do to him? Were I in that poor man's condition that begs an alms, would I not rather have some relief, than a churlish, or at least, an empty answer? Were I he that buys, would I not, and might I not justly and reasonably will to have it so, that no more be exacted of me than the right and due price? then so will I use him." How few that walk (I say) by this rule? and yet all that do not thus, are breakers of this commandment in the sight of God.

How few that are inviolable observers of equity, and are truly liberal and bountiful answerably to

their power? that will sometimes on purpose bate a dish from their table, or a lace from their garment, not to make their stock greater, but to bestow on the poor? that are truly desirous of the good and prosperity of others, and further it all they can?

It is to be like God, this is the particular[t], wherein likeness to our heavenly Father is prest; and this is meant by *Homo homini Deus.* Certainly were we acquainted with it, it is more true delight to be not only just but liberal, than to possess much; it is not to possess, but to be possest by it, to have heaps, and no heart nor power to use them. He that is thus, doth not only defraud others but himself, steals* from his own necessities to sacrifice to his god, his chest or bag. When a man hath such a sum, and though he hath use for it dares not break it, what is it better than if it were still under ground in the mine, it is no more at his service; yea, so much the worse that he is racked betwixt plenty and want, betwixt having and not having it.

Both the covetous and the prodigal sin against this commandment: the covetous by unjust ways of gaining, and unjust keeping what he hath gained, keeping it up both from others and himself: and the prodigal by profuseness, making foolish wants to himself, that drive him upon unjust ways of supply†. Thus he that is prodigal must be covetous too; and though men think not so, these two vices that seem so opposite, not only may, but do often dwell together, and covetousness is prodigality's purveyor, being fire for it to feed it, for otherwise it could not subsist, but would starve within a while. Here then both avarice and prodigality are condemned; only true equity, and frugal and wise liberality are obedience to it.

The main causes of all unjust and illiberal dealing are these two, 1. Diffidence or distrust of the

[t] Matt. v.

* Quicquid omnibus abstulit, sibi negat.

† Turpiter amittens quod turpiùs reparet. SEN.

divine providence and goodness. 2. And that Πλεονεξία that same *Amor sceleratus habendi, the fond desire of having much.*

1. When a man doth not fully trust God with providing for him, and blessing him in just and lawful ways, but apprehends want unless he take some more liberty and elbow-room; this makes him step now and then out of the way, to catch at undue gain by fraud and over-reaching, or some such way: but this is a most foolish course, this is to break loose out of God's fatherly hand, and so to forego all that we can look for from him, and to take ways of our own, to chuse rather to go a shifting for ourselves in the crooked and accursed ways of unrighteousness, than to be at his providing. Labour therefore for fixed belief of his wisdom and goodness, and all-sufficiency, and then the greatest straits and wants will not drive you to any indirect ways, wherein you run from him, but will still draw you nearer to himself, and there you will stay and wait upon his hand till he supply you.

2. Desire of having much, or covetousness, whether it be to hoard up or lavish out. But this is a madness; this desire of having much is never cured by having much, it is an unsatiable dog-hunger *.

That known determination of the moralist was the most true, that to be truly rich, is not to have much, but to desire little; labour then not to desire much, or rather desire much, desire to have the Lord for your portion †; and if you indeed desire him, you shall have him, and if you have him, you cannot but be satisfied, for he is all: to him therefore be all praise, honour, and glory for ever. *Amen.*

* Βυλίμια, vel canina fames.

† Non est illud desiderium, πλεονεξία sed πενιξία.

PRECEPT IX.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

The apostle St. *James*, in that sharp but most true censure of the tongue, might well call it an *unruly evil.* There are but ten precepts or words of the law of God, and you see two of them, so far as concerns the outward organ and vent of the sins there forbidden, are bestowed on it, tending, if not only, yet mainly to keep it in order; one in the first table, and this other in the second, as being ready to fly out both against God and man, if not thus bridled.

The end of the commandment is to guard the good name of men from injury, as the former doth his goods; this possession being no less, yea, much more precious than the other: and, because the great robber and murtherer of a good name, is the mischievous detracting tongue, acted by a malignat heart; it requires in the heart a charitable tenderness of the good name of our brethren, and that will certainly prove truth and charitable speech in the tongne.

Though divines here usually speak of lying, in the general notion and extent of it, and not amiss, being most of all exercised in the kind here mentioned; yet there be such lies, as may be more fitly reputed a breach of some other commandment; and possibly, the sin of lying in general, as it is a lie, a discrepance of the speech from the mind, and so a subverting of the divine ordinance set in nature, making that which he hath made the interpreter of the mind, to be the disguiser of it, and withal disregarding God as the searcher of the heart, and sovereign witness of truth, and avenger of falshood; I say, thus it may possibly be more proper to refer it

to another commandment, particularly to the third: but it imports not much to be very punctual in this; it is seldom or never that one commandment is broke alone, most sins are complicate disobedience, and in some sins, the breach of many at once is very apparent. As to instance, in perjury, if it be to testify a falshood against our brethren, both the third commandment and this ninth are violate at once; and if it be in such a thing as toucheth his life, the sixth likewise suffers with them.

This perjury or false testimony in a public judiciary way, is, we see, by the express words and letter of the command forbidden, as the highest and most heinous wrong of this kind*: but under the name of this (as it is in the other commandments) all the other kinds and degrees of offence against our neighbours good name are comprised, 1. All private ways of calumny and false imputation. 2. All ungrounded and false surmises or suspicions, all uncharitable construction of others actions and carriage. 3. Strict remarking of the faults of others, without any calling so to do, or honest intention of their good; which appears, if, having observed any thing that of truth is reprovable, we seek not to reclaim them by secret and friendly admonition, but passing by themselves divulge it abroad to others: for this is a most foolish self-deceit to think, that because it is not forged, but true that thou speakest, this keeps thee free of the commandment; no, thy false intention and malice† makes it calumny and falshood in thee, although for the matter of it, what thou sayest be most true; all thou gainest by it is, that thou dost tumble and bemire thyself in the sin of another, and makest it possibly more thine, than it is his own, that committed it; for he, may be, hath some touch of remorse for it; whereas it is evident thou delightest in it: and though

* Ut testis falsi aut testimonium falsi non dices aut respondebis.

† Ἀληθεύοντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ, EPHES. iv. We must not only speak the truth, but in love.

thou preface it with a whining feigned regret and semblance of pitying him, and add withal some word of commending him in somewhat else; this is but the gilding and sugaring the pill to make men swallow it the more easily, and thy bitter malice pass unperceived. They that by their calling ought to watch over the lives of others, must do it faithfully and diligently, admonishing and rebuking privately; and where that prevails not, they may, yea, they ought to do it more publicly, but all in love, seeking nothing but the glory of God and the salvation of souls. 4. Easy hearing and entertaining of misreports and detractions when others speak them[r], this is that which maintains and gives subsistence to calumny, otherwise it would starve and die of itself, if nobody took it in and gave it lodging. When malice pours it out, if our ears be shut against it, and there be no vessel to receive it, it would fall like water upon the ground, and could no more be gathered up; but there is that same busy humour that men have, it is very busy, and yet the most have of it more or less, a kind of delight and contentment to hear evil of others, unless it be of such as they affect; to hear others slighted and disesteemed, that they readily drink in not without some pleasure, whatsoever is spoken of this kind. *The ear trieth the words* (as he says in *Job*) *as the mouth tasteth meats*, but certainly the most ears are perverse and distempered in their taste, as some kind of palates are; can find sweetness in sour calumny. But, because men understand one another's diet in this, that the most are so; this is the very thing that keeps up the trade, makes backbiting and detractions abound so in the world, and verifies that known observation in the most, that the slanderer wounds three at once, himself, him he speaks of, and him that hears: for this third, truly it is in his option to be none of the number; if he will, he may shift his part of the blow, by not believing the

[r] Exod. xxiii. 1.

slander; yea, may beat it back again with ease upon the slanderer himself by a check or frown, and add that stroke of a repulse to the wound of guiltiness he gives himself. 5. They offend that seek in any kind at the expence of the good name and esteem of others, to increase their own, out of others ruins to make up themselves*; and therefore pull down as much as they can, and are glad to have others to help them to detract from the repute of their brethren, particularly, any that are in likelihood to surpass and obscure them; and for this reason incline always rather to hear and speak of the imperfections and dispraise of others, than to their advantage, and would willingly, *Ottoman*-like, kill the good name of their brethren, that theirs may reign alone†. This is a vile disease, and such as cannot be incident to any mind that is truly virtuous and gracious; no, such need not this base dishonest way to raise themselves, but are glad to see virtue, and whatsoever is praise-worthy, to flourish in whomsoever; these are lovers of God indeed, and his glory, and not their own; and therefore as all he bestows on themselves, they venture back the honour of it to him, so they are glad to see many enriched with his best gifts; for seeing all good that all have belongs to God, as the sovereign owner and dispenser, this contents and rejoices his children when they see many partake of his bounty, for the more is his glory: and as in love to their brethren, they are always willing to take notice of what is commendable in them, and to commend it, so they do this the more willingly, because they know that all praise of goodness at last terminates and ends in God, as *Solomon* says of the

* Ex alieni nominis jactura gradum sibi faciunt ad gloriam. SALUST.

† The Rabbins frequently condemn this. HAMMITH CABBED, &c. qui honorat se ex ignominia socii sui, non habet partem in seculo venturo. BERES. RAB. Item, qui per contemptum aliorum laudem suam quærit, miserrimus est omnium hominum. Quis est honore dignus? qui honorat alios homines. ABOTH. c. 4.

rivers, *Unto the place from whence they come thither they return again.* 6. They sin against this commandment, that although they no way wrong their neighbour's good name, yet are not careful to do their utmost to right it when it suffers, to remove aspersions from them, and to clear them all that may be.

For this is here required, to desire and delight in, and further the good name of others, even as our own, to look most willingly on the fairest side of their actions, and take them in the best sense, and be as inventive of favourable constructions (yet without favouring vice) as malice is witty to misinterpret to the worst: to observe the commendable virtues of our brethren, and pass by their failings; as many, like scurvy flies, skip over what is sound in men, and love to sit upon their sores.

It is lamentable to consider how much this evil of mutual detraction, and supplanting the good name one of another is rooted in man's corrupt nature, and how it spreads and grows in their converse, as the apostle *St. Paul* cites it out of the *Psalmist*, as the description of our nature, *Their throat is an open sepulchre, they have deceitful tongues, and the poison of asps is under their lips*[u]. Their throat an open sepulchre, full of the bones as it were of others good names that they have devoured: and[x], amongst other their endowments, they are whisperers, backbiters, despiteful. But it is strange that Christians should retain so much of these evils, that profess themselves renewed, and sanctified, and guided by the Spirit of God. Consider in your visits, and discourses, if something of this kind doth not entertain you often, and lavish away that time you might spend in mutual edifications, abusing it to descant upon the actions and life of others, in a way as neither concerns nor profits us, taking an impertinent foolish delight in enquiring and knowing how this

[u] Rom. iii. [x] Rom. i.

party lives, and the other *. This is a very common disease, as *Nazianzen* observes; and thus men are most strangers at home, have not leisure to study and know and censure themselves, they are so busied about others. It may be there is not always a height of malice in their discourses, but yet by much babbling to no purpose, they slide into idle detraction and censure of others besides their intention, for *in multitude of words there wants not sin.*

And the greatest part are so accustomed to this way, that if they be put out of it, they must sit dumb and say nothing. There is, I confess, a prudent observation of the actions of others, a reading of men, as they call it, and it may be by a Christian done with Christian prudence and benefit; and there may be too an useful way of men's imparting their observation of this kind one to another concerning the good and evil, the abilities more or less that they remark in the world; but truly it is hard to find such as can do this aright, and know they agree in their purpose with honest harmless minds, intending evil to none, but good to themselves, and admitting of nothing but what suits with this. Amongst a throng of acquaintance a man shall, it may be, find very few by whose conversation he may be really bettered, and that return him some benefit for the expence of his time in their society. Howsoever, beware of such as delight in vanity and lying, and defaming of others, and withdraw yourselves from them, and set a watch before your own lips; learn to know the fit season of silence and speech, for that is a very great point of wisdom, and will help very much to the observing this precept, to give your tongue to be governed by wisdom and piety; let it not be as a thorny bush pricking and hurting those that are about you, not alto-

* Curiosum genus ad cognoscendam vitam alienam, desidiosum ad corrigendam suam. AUG. conf. l. 10. cap. 3. ἐδδὲν ἔτως ἥδυ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὡς τὸ λαλεῖν τὰ ἀλλότρια. ORAT. I.

gether a barren tree yielding nothing, but a fruitful tree, a *tree of life to your neighbour*, as *Solomon* calls the tongue of the righteous.

And let your hearts be possest with those two excellent graces, Humility and Charity, then will your tongue not be in danger of hurting your neighbour, for it is pride and self-love makes men delight in that. Those are the idols to which men make sacrifice of the good name and reputation of others. The humble man delights in self-disesteem, and is glad to see his brethren's name flourish, it is pleasing music to him to hear of the virtues of others acknowledged and commended, and a harsh discord to his lowly thoughts to hear any thing of his own. And the other, Charity, *thinks no evil*, is so far from casting false aspersions on any, that it rather casts a veil upon true failings and blemishes, *Love covers a multitude of sins*, it is like God's love that begets it, which covers all the sins of his own children.

PRECEPT X.

Thou shalt not covet, &c.

It is a known truth, that there is no sound cure of diseases without a removal of their inward cause; therefore this second table of the law, containing the rule of equity for the redress of unrighteousness in men's dealing one with another, doth in this last precept of it strike at the very root of that unrighteousness, the corrupt desires and evil concupiscence of the heart, *Thou shalt not covet*, &c.

The *Romish* division of this into two, is so grossly absurd, and so contrary both to the voice of antiquity and reason, that it needs not stay us much to shew it such. The thing forbidden is one, *Thou shalt not covet;* and if the several things not to be coveted divide it, it will be five or six, as well as two:

Though it be *Peter's* pretended sword makes the division, yet certainly it is not *Paul's* ὀρθοτομεῖν, not a dividing of the word aright, but cutting it, as it were, besides the joint. The truth is, they would never have mistook so far as to have offered at this division, were they not driven upon it by an evil necessity of their own making; because they have quite cut out the second, they are forced, for making up the number, to cut this in two. This is but to salve a first wrong with a second, it is *Vitium primæ concoctionis quod non corrigitur in secunda*, as they speak; having smothered one commandment, they would have this divided, as the harlot the living child. The subject of this commandment, that which it forbids is not I confess original sin in its nature and whole latitude; no, nor all kind of sinful motions immediately arising from it, but such as concern human things, belonging to this second table as their rule; as is clear in all the particulars named in the commandment, and the general word that closes it including the rest, and all other things of that kind, *Nor any thing that is thy neigbour's.* Nor is it needful (with others) for the distinguishing this precept from the rest, to call this concupiscence here forbidden, only the first risings of it in the heart, without consent, whereas the other commandments forbid the consent of the will; I conceive there is no danger to say, that both are forbidden, both in this and the rest, but in this more expressly.

For what great necessity is there of such subtle distinguishing? May not this be sufficient, that what is included in the other commandments duly understood, it pleased the divine wisdom to deliver in this last more expressly, that none might pretend ignorance, and so to provide for the more exact observance of justice and equity amongst men in their actions, by a particular law given to the heart, the fountain of them, regulating it in its disposition and

motions, even the very first stirrings of it, which do most discover its disposition?

And that this is no tautology, nor a superfluous labour, unsuiting the exquisite brevity of this law, we will easily confess, if we consider, that natural hypocrisy and self-indulgence that is in men, that makes them still less regard the temper and actings of their hearts, than their outward carriage, notwithstanding this express commandment concerning it; how much more would they have thought their thoughts, at least such as proceed not to full consent, exempted from the law, if there had been nothing spoke of them, but they only included in the other precepts? We know how the Doctors of *Rome* extenuate the matter, and how favourably their opinion is in this point, notwithstanding this clear voice of the law of God condemning all concupiscence. The apostle St. *Paul* confesses ingenuously his own short-sightedness, though a *Pharisee* instructed in the law, that unless the law had said, *Thou shalt not lust*[p], he had not found it out in the other commandments, nor known the sinfulness of it.

This all-wise lawgiver knew both the blindness of man's mind, and the hypocrisy and deceitfulness of his heart, and therefore takes away all pretext and turns him out of all excuse, giving this last commandment expressly concerning the heart, and so teaching him the exact and spiritual nature of all the rest.

This commandment pursues the iniquity of man into its beginning and source. Our Saviour calls the evil heart, an *evil treasure*; it is an inexhaustible treasure of evil, yea it diminisheth not at all, but increaseth rather by spending: the acting of sin, confirming and augmenting the corrupt habit of it in the heart, *Out of this evil treasure issue forth those pollutions that defile the whole man, evil thoughts, murders, adulteries*[q], &c.

[p] Rom. vii. [q] Matt. xv.

It is not proper here to speak at large of the first motions of sin in general, and of the way to difference (if any such can be given as certain) the injections of Satan; evil thoughts darted in by him, and such as spring immediately from that corruption that lodgeth within our own breasts, and other things that concern the subject: only this we ought to observe as pertinent and useful, that if we did consider the purity of the law of God and the impurity of our own hearts, the continual risings of sinful concupiscences within us, that stain us and all our actions, this would lay us a great deal lower in our own opinion than usually we are, *The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin,* says the Apostle.

Men think it is well with them, and they please themselves to think so, and glory in it, that their whole life hath been outwardly unblameable, and possibly free from the secret commission of gross sins: but would they that are thus most spotless, look a little deeper inward upon the incessant workings of vain sinful thoughts, that at least touch upon the affection, and stir it somewhat; and consider their hearts naturally like boiling pots, still sending up of this scum of evil concupiscence, and as a fountain casteth forth her waters, as *Jeremy* speaks, this bitter poison-spring still streaming forth, and even in the best not fully dried up.

There are three transgressions *, say the *Talmudists*, from which a man can no day ever in this life be free; the thoughts of sin, wandrings in prayer, and an evil tongue.

Certainly the due sight of these would abate much of those gay thoughts that any can have of themselves, and from the best and most sensible would draw out the apostle's word, *O wretched man that*

* Tres sunt transgressiones, à quibus homo nullo die, inquiunt Talmudici, nunquam in hac vita liberabitur, cogitationes peccati, attentio orationis, (*i. e.* quod nunquam satis attentè per omnem attentionem orare possit;) & lingua mala. Bava. Bosca. f. 1342.

I am, who shall deliver me[r], *&c.* There is nothing that doth more certainly both humble and grieve the godly man, than the sense of this; and because till then it will not cease to vex him, nothing makes him more long for the day of his full deliverance, and makes him cry, *Usquequo Domine, usquequo? O how long O Lord, how long?*

2. We are taught by this commandment that great point of spiritual prudence, to observe the beginnings and conception of sin within us, and to crush it then when it is weakest, before it pass on in its usual gradation, as the Apostle St. *James* makes it[s]. If it draw us away but to hear it, it will entice us, take us with delight, and then it will by that work us to consent, and having so conceived it will bring forth sin, and sin finished will bring forth death.

3. Because (as we see) the very concupiscence itself, though it proceed no further, pollutes and leaves a stain behind it; this calls for our diligence, to seek that renovation and habitual purity of heart infused from above, and the daily increase of it, being begun, that may free us more and more from that depraved concupiscence and the defilements of it. Think it not enough to cleanse the tongue and the hands, but above all endeavour for cleanness of heart, and that will keep all the rest clean[t].

The concupiscence particularly here forbid, we see, is an inordinate desire, or the least beginning of such a desire of those outward things that belong not to us, *Thy neighbour's* house, &c. for all breach of the other commandments of this second table have their rise and beginning from such a desire; therefore this is set last, as the hedge to guard all the rest from violation: for certainly he that flies the least motion of a wrongful thought, will never proceed to any injurious word or action. So then, this commandment is broken by the least envious

[r] Rom. vii. 24. [s] James i. 14, 15. [t] James iv. 8. Jer. iv. 14.

look upon any good of others, or the least bendings of mind after it for ourselves, and by that common mischief of self-love, as the very thing that gives life to all such undue desires, and by that common folly of discontent at our own estate, which begets a wishing for that of others; and this, though it be not joined with an express desire of their loss or hurt, yet because it is the seed and principle of injustice, therefore it is sinful, and here forbidden.

And on the contrary, much of the observance of this precept lies in that αὐτάρκεια, that contentedness and satisfaction of mind with our own estate, which will surely keep us free from this disordered coveting. Therefore primely labour to have that wise and sweet contentation dwelling within you, and banish all contrary thoughts, by these and other such like considerations,

1. If you do indeed believe that it is the sovereign hand of God that *divides to the nations their inheritance*, as *Moses* speaks [q], and so likewise to particular men, that he carves to every one their condition and place in the world, you cannot but think he hath done it more wisely than men could do for themselves. They could never agree upon it, every man would think it best for himself to be in the best and highest condition, and that is not possible; but it is best for the making up of the universe, that there be those differences God hath made, and from the highest to the lowest he hath set each one in that station he thought good. There is not a common soldier in an army but would wish to be a commander, and so if each might have his will, all would command and none obey. The like holds in masters and servants, and in all such other differences. So then, seeing those differences are in the world, and seeing it wholly belongs to him that rules the world to dispose of them, our part is no more but contentedly to accept of his dispose, and to serve him in the station where he hath set us.

[q] Deut. xxxii. 8.

2. If you be such as have evidence you are the children of God, then you know he doth not only allot your condition wisely, but withal in peculiar love and favour; he perfectly knows what outward estate is particularly fittest for you, and will conduce most to your highest good, and will not miss to give you that, and no other. And certainly it is true in matter of estate, as of our garments, not that which is largest, but that which fits us best, is best for us.

3. Consider that no outward condition hath contentment in it of itself, this must arise from somewhat within: men see the great attendance and train of servants that wait upon princes and other great persons, but they see not the train of cares and perplexing thoughts that many times go along too, and are more inseparable attendants than any of the rest; they see their fine cloaths and stately buildings, but they see not the secret malecontents and vexations that dwell with them, and are the very linings of their rich apparel. Light things often discontent them; look but on their very pastimes and recreations, they are sometimes as much troubled with disappointment in those, as the poor man is wearied with his labour. It was not a much greater cross that vexed *Haman*; all his advancement availed not without *Mordecai's* courtesy: a strange disease, that he felt more the pain of another man's stiff knee, than the contentment of all his honours. But whoso knew their deeper vexations would admire them less, when crossed in their ambition or friends, or the husband and wife not finding that harmony of dispositions and affections: few or none but have something that a man would willingly leave out, if he were for his wish to be in their condition. The shorter and surer way then to contentment, is, to be contentedly what he is.

4. Consider those that are below you, and in a far meaner condition, and by that argue yourself, not only to contentment, but to thankfulness. We

pervert all, when we look below us, it raises our pride; and when above us, it casts us into discontent: might we not as well contrariwise draw humility out of the one, and contentment out of the other.

5. Seek to be assured that God is yours, then whatsoever others possess, you will be sure not to covet it, nor envy them. Those that have most, you will pity, if they want him; and those that have him, you will have no evil at them for sharing with you, but love them the more: for that infinite Good is enough for all that chuse him, and none do so but those whom he hath first chosen in eternal love.

A

DISCOURSE

ON

MATTHEW xxii. 37—39.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

THE wisdom and meekness of our Saviour is the more remarkable, and shines the brighter, by the malice of his adversaries; and their cavils and tempting questions occasion our benefit and instruction. Thus here,

We see the words are the sum of the whole law, and they are taken out of the book of the law: they are called *two commandments;* the former is the sum of the first, the latter of the second table. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,* &c. *That is,* says our Saviour, *the first and great commandment.* Our first obligement is to God, and through him and for his sake to men: *The second like to it.*

Seems it not rather contrary than like to the former; whereas in the former the whole stream of love is directed in one undivided current towards God, this other commandment seems to cut up a new channel for it, and to turn a great part of it to men, *Thy neighbour as thyself?* No, they are not contrary, if we take them right; yea, they do not only agree, but are inseparable; they do not divide

our love, but they set it in its right course; first wholly to God, as the sovereign good, and only for himself worthy to be loved; and then back from him, it is according to his own will derived downwards to our neighbour; for then only we love both ourselves and others aright, when we make our love to him the reason and the rule of both*. So then our love is to be immediately divided betwixt him and our neighbour, or any creature, but is first all to be bestowed on him, and then he diffuses by way of reflexion so much of it upon others as he thinks fit: being all in his hands, it is at his dispose, and that which he disposes elsewhere as here, *(Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself)* it is not taken off from him, but abiding still in him, as in its natural place: as light doth in the sun, flows forth from him by such an emanation as divides it not; as beams flow forth from the sun and enlighten the air, and yet are not cut off from it.

So then the second is like unto the first, because it springs from it, and depends on it, it commands the same affection; love in the former placed on God, and in this extended from him to our neighbour. And like in this too, that as the former is the sum of the first table, and so the first and great commandment; so this is the sum of the second table, and therefore next unto it in greatness and importance.

All the precepts that can be found in the law and prophets are reducible to these, and all obedience depends upon this love. 1. Consider this, how those are the sum of this law. 2. Particularly in themselves.

Not only because it is love facilitates all obedience, and is the true principle of it, that makes it both easy to us, and acceptable to God; but besides this, that

* Minus enim te amat, qui aliquid præter te amat, & non propter te. Incipiat homo amare Deum, & non amabit in homine nisi Deum. Aug.

love disposes the soul for all kind of obedience, this very act of love is in effect all that is commanded in the law. For the first laid to the first table, it is so much one with the first commandment, that it expresses most fitly the positive of it, opposite to that which is there forbidden, "*Thou shalt have no other gods before me*, but shalt have me alone for thy God, or bestow all divine affection, and all worship that is the sign and expression of it, upon me only, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, &c. And if thou lovest me alone, thou wilt not decline to any kind of false worship, that were to vitiate thy affection, and to break that conjugal love and fidelity to which thou art bound by covenant, being my people as by a spiritual marriage." Therefore is idolatry so frequently called, in the phrase of the prophets, *adultery* and *uncleanness:* and in the letter of that commandment, the Lord uses that word, which in its usual sense is conjugal, and relates to marriage, *I am a jealous God;* and in the close of that precept expresseth particularly this affection of love, as particularly interested in it, though extended to all the rest, *I shew mercy to thousands of them that love me.*

Is it not a genuine property of love to honour and respect the name of those whom we love, and therefore it is altogether inconsistent with the love of God to vilify and abuse his name?

They that understand the true use of that holy rest of the sabbath-day, do know that it frees the soul, and makes it vacant from earthly things for this purpose, that it may fully apply itself to the worship and contemplation of God, and converse with him at greater length. Then certainly where there is this entire love to God, this will not weigh heavy, will be no grievous task to it, it will embrace and gladly obey this commandment, not only as its duty, but as its great delight; for there is nothing that love rejoices in more, than in the converse and society of those on whom it is placed,

would willingly bestow most of its time that way, and thinks all hours too short that are spent in that society. Therefore not only they that profanely break, but they that keep it heavily and wearily, that find it rather a burthen than a delight, may justly suspect that the love of God is not in them; but he that keeps his day chearfully, and loves it, because on it he may more liberally solace and refresh himself in God, may safely take it as an evidence of his love to God.

Now that after the same manner the love of our neighbour is the sum of the second table, the apostle St. *Paul* proves it for us clearly and briefly*. All the commandments touching our neighbour are for guarding him from evil and injury. Now *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore is the fulfilling of the law.* He that truly loves his neighbour as himself, will be as loth to wrong him as to wrong himself, either in that honour and respect that is due to him, or in his life or chastity, or goods or good name, or to lodge so much as an unjust desire or thought, because that is the beginning and conception of real injury. In a word, the great disorder and crookedness of the corrupt heart of man, consists in self-love; it is the very root of all sin both against God and man; for no man commits any offence, but it is some way to profit or please himself. It was a high enormity of self-love, that brought forth the very first sin of mankind; that was the bait that took more than either the colour or taste of the apple, that it was desirable for knowledge; it was in that that the main strength of the temptation lay, *ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* And was it not deep self-love to affect that? And it is still thus, though we feel the miserable fruits of that tree: the same self-love possesses us still, that to please our own humour and lusts, our pride, or covetousness, or voluptuousness, we break the law of God, the law of

* Rom. iii. 9, 10.

piety, and of equity and charity to men. Therefore the apostle, foretelling the iniquities and impieties of the last times, *covetous, boasters,* &c. and *lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God;* he sets that on the front, as the chief leading evil, and the source of all the rest, lovers of their ownselves: men shall be lovers of themselves, therefore *covetous;* and *lovers of themselves more than lovers of God,* because *lovers of their ownselves*[y]. Therefore this is the sum of that which God requires in his holy law, the reforming of our love, which is the commanding passion of the soul, and wheels all the rest about with it in good or evil.

And its reformation is in this, recalling it from ourselves unto God, and reflecting it from God to our brethren; loving ourselves sovereignly by corrupt nature, we are enemies to God, and haters of him, and cannot love our neighbours but only in reference to ourselves, and so far as it profits or pleaseth us to do so, and not in order and respect unto God: the highest and the true redress of this disorder, is that which we have here in these two precepts as the substance of all; first that all our love ascend to God, and then what is due to men descend from thence, and so passing that way it is purified and refined, and is subordinate and conformed to our love of him above all, which is the first and great commandment.

Here we have the supreme object of love, to whom it is due, *the Lord thy God,* and the measure of it, which is indeed to know no measure*, *with all thy heart, all thy soul, and all thy mind,* (for which in *Deut. thy strength,*) *Luke* hath both; the difference is none, for all mean that the soul, and all the powers of it, unite and combine themselves in their most intense and highest strength to the love of God, and that all the workings of the soul, and ac-

[y] 2 Tim. iii. 2.

* Modus est nescire modum, subtiliùs ista distinguere facile est magis quàm solidum.

tions of the whole man be no other, but the acting and exercise of this love.

He accounts nor accepts of nothing we can offer him, if we give not the heart with it; and he will have none of that neither, unless he have it all: and it is a poor all when we have given it, for the great God to accept of. If one of us had the affection of a hundred, yea of all the men in the world, yet could he not love God answerable to his full worth and goodness: all the glorified spirits, angels, and men, that are or shall be in their perfections, loving him with the utmost extent of their souls, do not altogether make up so much love as he deserves, yet he is pleased to require our heart, and the love we have to bestow on him; and though it is infinitely due of debt, yet he will take it as a gift, *My Son, give me thy heart.*

Therefore the soul that begins to offer itself to him, although overwhelmed with the sense of its own unworthiness, and the meanness of its love, yet may say, "Lord, I am ashamed of this gift I bring thee, yet because thou callest for it, such as it is, here it is, the heart and all the love I have, I offer unto thee; and had I ten thousand times more, it should all be thine; as much as I can I love thee, and I desire to be able to love thee more; although I am unworthy to be admitted to love, yet thou art most worthy to be loved by me, and besides thou dost allow, yea commandest me to love thee; my loving of thee adds nothing to thee, but it makes me happy; and though it be true, the love and heart I offer thee is infinitely too little for thee, yet there is nothing besides thee enough for it."

The Lord, or Jehovah, thy God.] There lie the two great reasons of love, τὸ ἀγαπητον and το ἰδιον, *Jehovah* the spring of being and goodness, infinitely lovely. All the beauty and excellencies of the creatures are but a drop of that ocean. And *thy God*, to all of us the Author of our life, and of all that we enjoy, that spread forth those heavens that roll about

us, and comfort us with their light and motions, and influences; and established this earth that sustains us; that furnisheth us with food and raiment, and in a word (and it is the apostle's) that gives us, ζωὴν καὶ πνοὴν καὶ πάντα, *life, and breath, and all things;* and to the believer, his God in a nearer propriety, by redemption and peculiar covenant. But our misery is, the most of us do not study and consider him, what he is in himself and to us, and therefore do not love him, because we know him not.

And thy neighbour as thyself.] If we will not confess nor suspect ourselves, how much we are wanting in the former, yet our manifest defect in this will discover it, therefore the apostle[z] speaks of this as all, because though inferior to the other, yet connected with it, and the surest sign of it. For these live and die together. The apostle *St. John* is express in it, and gives those hypocrites the lie plainly. *If any man* (says he) *loves God, and hates his brother, he is a liar*, &c. We have no real way of expressing our love to God, but in our converse with men, and in the works of love towards them.

Certainly that sweet affection of love to God, cannot consist with malice and bitterness of spirit against our brethren. No, it sweetens and calms the soul, and makes it all love every way.

As thyself.] As truly both wishing, and to thy power procuring his good, as thy own. Consider how much unwilling thou art to be injured or defamed, and have the same thoughts for thy brother; be as tender for him. But how few of us aspire to this degree of charity?

Thy very enemies are not here excluded; if self-love be still predominant in thee instead of the love of God, then thou wilt make thine own interest the rule of thy love; so when thou art, or conceivest thou art wronged by any, the reason of thy love ceaseth; but if thou love for God, that reason abides

[z] Rom. xiii.

still*: "God hath commanded me to love my enemies, and he gives me his example, he does good to the wicked that offend him."

And this is indeed a trial of our love to God: one hath marred thee, that gives thee to think that thou hast no cause to love him for thyself; be it so, self-love forbids thee, but the love of God commands thee to love him. God says, "If thou lovest me, love him for my sake." And if thy love to God be sincere, thou wilt be glad of the occasion to give so good a testimony of it, and find a pleasure in that which others account so difficult and painful.

* Amicus diligendus in Deo, & inimicus propter Deum, Aug.

A

DISCOURSE

ON

HEBREWS VIII. 10.

For this is the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel *after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.*

THE two great evils that perplex sensible minds, are the guiltiness of sin, and the power of it; therefore this new covenant hath in it two promises opposite to these two evils, free pardon to remove the guilt of sin, and the subduing of its power by the law of God written in the heart. Of this latter only for the present. Having spoke somewhat of the sense of the law in ten commandments, and of the sum of it in two, this remains to be considered as altogether necessary for obedience, and without which all hearing and speaking, and all the knowledge of it, will be fruitless; though it be made very clear and legible without, we shall only read it, and not at all keep it, unless it be likewise written within.

Observe, 1. The agreement of the law with the gospel: The gospel bears the compleat fulfilling of the law, and satisfying its highest exactness in our surety Jesus Christ, so that way nothing is abated; but, besides in reference to ourselves, though it take off the rigour of it from us, because answered by another for us, yet it doth not abolish the rule

of the law, but establisheth it. It is so far tearing or blotting out the outward copies c that it writes it anew, where it was not before, within, sets it upon the heart in sure and deep racters. We see this kind of writing of the la a promise for the days of the gospel, cited out of prophet *Jeremy*, &c.

There is indeed no such writing of the law in or keeping of it by us, as will hold good for justification in the sight of God, therefore th other promise runs combined with it, the free fo giveness of iniquity. But again, there is no suc forgiveness as sets a man free to licentiousness an contempt of God's law, but on the contrary bind him more strongly to obedience; therefore to tha sweet promise of the pardon of sin, is inseparably joined this other of inward writing of the law. The heart is not washed from the guiltiness of sin in the blood of Christ, that it may wallow and defile itself again in the same puddle, but it is therefore washed that the tables or leaves of it may be clean, for receiving the pure characters of that law of God which is to be written on it.

Concerning this writing there are three things you may mark. 1. What it is. 2. What its necessity. 3. Who is its writer. The writing of the law in the heart, is briefly no other but the renewing and sanctifying of the heart by the infusion of grace, which is a heavenly light that gives the soul to know God aright; and that is added here as the same with the writing of the law in the heart, and an illustration of it, *They shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest.* And this light bringeth heat with it*. That right knowledge of God being in the soul, begets in it love to him; and love is the same with the fulfilling of the whole law: it takes up the whole soul, *I will put it in their mind and write it in their hearts.* If we will distinguish those, then it is, they shall both know it and love it, it shall

* Lux est vehiculum caloris.

not be written anew in their heads, and go no deeper, but written in their hearts; but we may well take both for the whole soul, for this kind of knowledge and love are inseparable; and where the one is, the other cannot be wanting.

So then a supernatural sanctified knowledge of God, is the law of God written in the heart; when it comes and entertains him as holy within it, then it hath not a dead letter of the law written in it, but νόμον ἔμψυχον, the law-giver himself, his name and will are engraven on it throughout, on every part of it, all that they know of God shall not be by mere report, and by the voice of others, but they shall inwardly read and know him within themselves. Which (by the by) makes not the public teaching and work of the ministry superfluous to any, even to those that know most of God, but signifies only this, that all they that do indeed receive and believe the gospel, are inwardly enlightened by the Spirit of God to understand the things of God, and have not their knowledge on bare trust of others that instruct them, without any particular persuasion and light within; but what they hear of spiritual things, they shall understand and know after a spiritual manner. And the universality of the promise signifies, that this kind of knowledge should be more frequently and more largely bestowed in the days of the gospel, than it was before.

2. The necessity of writing the law on the heart. Although there be in the natural conscience of man some dim character of the law, convincing him of grosser wickednesses, and leaving him inexcusable, of which the apostle speaks[h]; yet he is so far naturally from the right knowledge of God, and the love of his whole law, that, instead of that knowledge, his mind is full of darkness[i]; and contary to that love, his heart is possest with a natural enmity and antipathy against the law of God[k]. There is a

[h] Rom. ii. 15. [i] Eph. iv. 18. [k] Rom. viii. 7.

law within him directly opposite, which the apostle calls the *law of sin*[l]. Sin ruling and commanding the heart and whole man, making laws at its pleasure *, and obtaining full obedience. Therefore of necessity, before a man can be brought to obey the holy law of God, the inward frame of his heart must be changed, the corrupt law of sin must be abrogate[m], and the soul renounce obedience to it, and give itself up wholly, ἐις τύ που, to receive the stamp and impression of the law of God; and then having it written within upon his heart, his actions will bear the resemblance, and be conform unto it.

In this promise that God makes to his people, he hath regard to the nature of that obedience that he requires, because he will have it sincere and cordial, therefore he puts a living principle of it within, writes his law in the heart, and then it is in the words and actions derived from thence, and is more in the heart than in them: the first copy is in the heart, and all the other powers and parts of a man follow that, and so by that means, as it is sincere, so it is universal. The heart is that which commands all the rest: and as the vital spirits flow from it to the whole body; thus the law of God, being written in it, is diffused through the whole man: it might be in the memory or in the tongue, and not in the rest; but put it in the heart, and then it is undoubtedly in all.

Being written in the heart, makes the obedience likewise universal in the object (as they speak) to the whole law of God. When it is written only without a man, he may read one part and pass over another, may possibly chuse to conform to some part of the law, and leave the rest; but when the full copy of it is written in his heart, then it is all one law: and as in itself it is inseparable, as St. *James* teacheth us, so it is likewise in his esteem and affection and endeavour of obedience; he hath re-

[l] Rom. vii. 23. [m] Rom. vi.

* Tolerabis iniquas interiùs leges. *Claud.*

gard unto all the commandments as one, because of his love to the law of God, he hates not only some, but every false way, as *David* speaks. He that looks on the law without him, will possibly forbear to break it while others look upon him, his obedience lies much in the beholder's eye; but he that hath the law written within, cannot chuse but regard it as much in secret as in public, although his sin might be hid from the knowledge and censure of men, yet still it were violence done to that pure law that is within his breast, and therefore he hates it alike, as if it were public. This is the constant enemy of all sin, this law within him, *I have hid thy law in my heart*, says *David*, *that I might not sin against thee*, and makes a man abate nothing of his course of obedience and holiness because unseen, but like the sun that keeps on its motion when it is clouded from our eyes, as well as when we see it.

In a word, this writing of the law in the heart makes obedience a natural motion, I mean by a new nature; it springs not from outward constraints and respects, but from an inward principle, and therefore not only is it universal and constant, but chearful and easy. The law only written in tables of stone is hard and grievous; but make once the heart the table of it, and then there is nothing more pleasing. This law of God makes service delightful, even the painfulest of it[e]. The sun that moves with such wonderful swiftness, that to the ignorant it would seem incredible to hear how many thousands of miles it goes each hour; yet because it is naturally fitted for that course, it comes, as the Psalmist speaks, *like a bridegroom forth of his chamber, and rejoices as a strong man to run a race.* If the natural man be convinced of the goodness and equity of the law of God, yet because it is not written within, but only commands without, it is a violent motion to him to obey it, and therefore

[e] Psalm xl. 8.

he finds it a painful yoke. But hear *David*, in whose heart it was, speak of it, how often doth he call it his *delight* and his *joy?*

If any profane persons object to a godly man his exact life, that it is too precise, as if he writ each action before he do it; he may answer, as *Demosthenes* to him that objected he wrote his orations before he spake them, That he was not at all ashamed of that, although they were not only written, but engraven before-hand. Certainly the godly man lives by this law that is written and engraven on his heart, and needs not be ashamed of it.

It is true, the renewed man, even he that hath this law deepest written in his heart, yet while he lives here, is still molested with that inbred Antinomian, that law of sin that yet dwells in his flesh; though the force nnd power of it is broken, and its laws repealed in his conversion, and this new pure law placed in its stead: yet because that part which is flesh in him still entertains and harbours it, where it creates and breeds a Christian daily vexation, because sin hath lost dominion, it is still practising rebellion against that spiritual kingdom and law that is established in the regenerate mind: as a man that hath once been in possession of rule, though usurped, yet being subdued, he is still *working* in that kingdom to turbulent practices. But though by this (as the Apostle was, *Rom.* vii. 4.) every godly man is often driven to sad perplexities and complaints, yet in this is his comfort, that law of his God written there hath his heart and affection, sin is dethroned and thrust out of his heart, and hath only an usurped abode within him against his will, he sides with the law of God, and fights with all his power for it against the other; that holy law is his delight, and this law of sin his greatest grief.

3. *I will write.*] The Lord promises himself to do this, and it is indeed his prerogative; he wrote it at first on tables of stone, and this spiritual engraving it on the heart is much more his peculiar.

Other men might afterwards engrave it on stone, but no man can at all write it on the heart, not upon his own, much less upon another's. Upon his own he cannot, for it is naturally taken up and possest with that contrary law of sin, (as we said before) and is willingly subject to it, loves that law, and therefore in that posture it neither can nor will work this change upon itself to dispossess that law which it loves, and bring in that which it hates. No man can write this law on the heart of another, for it is inaccessible, his hand cannot reach it, he cannot come at it, how then should he write any thing on it? Men in the ministry of the word can but stand and call without, they cannot speak to within, far less write any thing within. Though they speak never so excellently and spiritually, and express no other but what is written on their own hearts, and certainly that is the most powerful way of speaking, and the likeliest for making an impression on the heart of another; yet unless the hand of God's own Spirit carry it into the hearer's heart, and set on the stamp of it there, it will perish as a sound in the air, and effect nothing. *Sonus verborum nostrorum aures percutit, magister intus. Nolite putare quenquam hominem aliquid discere ab alio homine, admonere possumus per strepitum vocis nostræ, si non est intus qui doceat, inanis strepitus est noster*[z]. Let this ever be acknowledged to his glory; the voice of men may beat the ear, but only he that made the heart can work upon it, and change and mould it as it pleaseth him: This is his own promise, and he alone makes it good. He writes his law on the hearts of his children, and by this work of his grace prepares them for glory; they that have this law written in their hearts, their names are certainly written in the Book of Life.

[z] Aug. in 1 Jo. Tr. 3.

A

SHORT CATECHISM.

Question. WHAT is naturally every man's chief desire?

Answer. To be happy.

Q. Which is the way to true happiness?

A. True religion.

Q. What is true religion?

A. The true and lively knowledge of the only true God, and of him whom he hath sent, Jesus Christ.

Q. Whence is this knowledge to be learned?

A. All the works of God declare his being, and his glory; but the clearer knowledge of himself, and his Son Jesus Christ, is to be learned from his own word, contained in the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

Q. What do those scriptures teach us concerning God?

A. That he is one infinite, eternal Spirit, most wise, and holy, and just, and merciful, and the all-powerful Maker and Ruler of the world.

Q. What do they further teach us concerning him?

A. That he is Three in One, and One in Three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Q. What will that lively knowledge of God effectually work in us?

A. It will cause us to believe in him, and to love him above all things, even above ourselves, to adore

and worship him, to pray to him, and to praise him and exalt him with all our might, and to yield up ourselves to the obedience of all his commandments, as having both made us, and made himself known to us for that very end.

Rehearse then the articles of our belief.

I believe in God the Father, &c.

Rehearse the Ten Commandments of the law, which are the rule of our obedience, and so the trial of our love.

A. God spake these words, I am the Lord thy God, &c.

Q. What is the summary our Saviour hath given us of this law?

A. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.

Q. What is the effectual means of obtaining increase of faith and power to obey, and generally all graces and blessings at the hand of God?

A. Prayer.

Rehearse that most excellent and perfect prayer that our Saviour hath taught us.

A. Our Father which art in heaven, &c.

Q. In what estate was man created?

A. After the image of God in holiness and righteousness.

Q. Did he continue in that estate?

A. No. But by breaking the commandment which his Maker gave him, eating of the fruit of that tree which was forbidden him, he made himself and his whole posterity subject to sin and death.

Q. Hath God left man in this misery, without all means and hopes of recovery?

A. No. For he so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Q. What is then the great doctrine of the gospel?

A. That same coming of the Son of God in the flesh, and giving himself to the death of the cross to take away the sin of the world, and his rising again from the dead, and ascending into glory.

Q. What doth that gospel mainly teach and really persuade all the followers of it to do?

A. It teacheth them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world.

Q. How hath our Lord Jesus himself expressed the great and necessary duty of all his disciples?

A. That they deny themselves, and take up their cross and follow him.

Q. Rehearse then some of the chief points wherein we are to follow our Lord Jesus Christ?

A. 1. To surrender ourselves wholly to our heavenly Father, and his good pleasure in all things, even in the sharpest afflictions and sufferings; and not at all to do our own will, or design our own praise or advantage, but in all things to do his will and intend his glory.

2. To be spotless, and chaste, and holy, in our whole conversation.

3. Add a third. To be meek and lowly, not to slander or reproach, to mock or despise any; and if any do so to us, to bear it patiently, yea to rejoice in it.

4. A fourth. Unfeignedly to love our Christian brethren, and to be charitably and kindly affected toward all men, even to our enemies, forgiving them, yea and praying for them, and returning them good for evil; to comfort the afflicted, and relieve the poor, and to do good for all as we are able.

Q. Is it necessary that all Christians live according to these rules?

A. So absolutely necessary, that they that do not so in some good measure, whatsoever they profess, do not really believe in Jesus Christ, nor have any portion in him.

Q. What visible seals hath our Saviour annexed to that gospel, to confirm our faith, and to convey the grace of it to us?

A. The two Sacraments of the New Testament, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Q. What doth baptism signify and seal?

A. Our washing from sin, and our new birth in Jesus Christ.

Q. What doth the Lord's Supper signify and seal?

A. Our spiritual nourishment and growth in him, and transforming us more and more into his likeness, by commemorating his death, and feeding on his body and blood, under the figures of bread and wine.

Q. What is required to make fit and worthy communicants of the Lord's Supper?

A. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance towards God, and charity towards all men.

Q. What is faith in our Lord Jesus?

A. It is the grace by which we both believe his whole doctrine, and trust in him as the Redeemer and Saviour of the world, and entirely deliver up ourselves to him, to be taught and saved and ruled by him, as our prophet, priest, and king.

Q. What is repentance?

A. It is a godly sorrow for sin, and a hearty and real turning from all sin unto God.

Q. What is the final portion of unbelieving and unrepentant sinners?

A. The everlasting torments of devils.

Q. What is the final portion of them that truly repent and believe, and obey the gospel?

A. The blessed life of angels, in the vision of God for ever.

A Question for young persons before their first Admission to the Lord's Supper.

Q. Whereas you were in your infancy baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, do you now upon

distinct knowledge, and with firm belief and pious affection, own that Christian faith of which you have given an account, and withal your baptismal vow of renouncing the service of Satan, and the world, and the lusts of the flesh, and of devoting yourself to God in all holiness of life?

A. I do sincerely and heartily declare my belief of that faith, and own my engagement to that holy vow, and resolve, by the assistance of God's grace, to continue in the careful observance of it all my days.

THEOLOGICAL

LECTURES.

LECTURE I.

THE INTRODUCTION.

WITH little strength I undertake a great work, or rather, with the least abilities, I venture upon a task which is of all others the greatest and most important. Among the various undertakings of men, can an instance be given of one more sublime than an intention to form the human mind anew, after the divine image? Yet it will, I doubt not, be universally acknowledged, that this is the true end and design, not only of ministers in their several congregations, but also of professors of divinity in schools. And though, in most respects, the ministerial office is evidently superior to that of professors of theology in colleges, in one respect the other seems to have the preference, as it is, at least for the most part, the business of the former to instruct the common sort of men, the ignorant and illiterate; while it is the work of the latter to season with heavenly doctrine the minds of select societies of youth, who have had a learned education, and are devoted to a studious life; many of whom, it is to be hoped, will, by the divine blessing, become preachers of the same salutary doctrine themselves. And surely this ought to be a powerful motive with all those

who, by the divine dispensation, are employed in such a work, to exert themselves with the greater life and spirit in the dicharge of their duty; especially when they consider, that those Christian instructions, and seeds of true piety, they instil into the tender minds of their pupils, will by them be spread far and wide, and, in due time, conveyed, as it were, by so many canals and aqueducts, to many parts of the Lord's vineyard. Plutarch employs an argument of this kind to prevail with the philosophers to exert themselves in the instruction of princes and great men, rather than with a haughty sullenness to avoid their company; "For thus, (says he,) you will find a short way to be useful to many." And, to be sure, he that conveys the principles of virtue and wisdom into the minds of the lower classes of men, or the illiterate, whatever progress his disciples may make, employs his time and talents only for the advantage of his pupils; but he that forms the minds of magistrates and great men, or such as are intended for high and exalted stations, by improving one single person, becomes a benefactor to large and numerous societies. Every physician of generous principles, as Plutarch expresses it *, would have an uncommon ambition to cure an eye intended to watch over many persons, and to convey the sense of seeing to numbers; and a musical instrument-maker would, with uncommon pleasure, exert his skill in perfecting a harp, if he knew that it was to be employed by the hands of Amphion, and, by the force of its music, to draw stones together for building the walls of Thebes. A learned and ingenious author, alluding to this fable, and applying it to our present purpose, calls professors of theology in schools, makers of harps, for building the walls of a far more famed and beautiful city, meaning the heavenly Jerusalem, in such manner, that the stones of this building being truly and without a fable living, and charmed by the pleasant harmony of the gospel,

* Φιλοκαλ.

come of their own accord to take their places in the wall.

I am not so little acquainted with myself, as to entertain the least hope of success in so great a work by my own strength and abilities; but, while I humbly depend upon the divine goodness and favour, I have no reason to despair; for in the hand of Omnipotence all instruments are alike: nor can it be questioned that he, who made all things out of nothing, can produce any change he pleases in his creatures that are already made; he who gives life and breath, and all things*, can easily strengthen the weak, and give riches in abundance to the poor and needy: our emptiness only serves to lay us open to, and attract the fulness of him, "who fills all things, and is over all; who gives wisdom to the mind, and prevents its irregular sallies †."

Under his auspices, therefore, (young gentlemen) we are to aspire to true and saving wisdom, and to try to raise ourselves above this sublunary world. For it is not my intention to perplex you with curious questions, and lead you through the thorny paths of disputation; but, if I had any share of that excellent art, it would be my delight to direct your way, through the easy and pleasant paths of righteousness, to a life of endless felicity, and be myself your companion in that blessed pursuit. I would take pleasure to kindle in your souls the most ardent desires, and fervent love of heavenly things; and, to use the expression of a great divine, add "wings to your souls, to snatch them away from this world, and restore them to God ‡." For, if I may be allowed to speak with freedom, most part of the notions that are treated of in theological schools, that are taught with great pomp and ostentation, and disputed with vast bustle and noise, may possibly have the sharp-

* Ζωην, και πνοην, και παντα.

† Ὁς παντα πληροῖ καὶ ανω παντος μένει.
Ος νοῦν σοφίζει, καὶ νόου φευγει βογώς.

‡ Πτερυγᾶν τὰς ψυχας καὶ ἁρπάσαι κόσμου καὶ δουναι Θεῖω.

ness of thorns; but they have also their barrenness; they may prick and tear, but they can afford no solid nourishment to the minds of men. "No man ever gathered grapes off thorns, nor figs off thistles. To what purpose, saith à Kempis, dost thou reason profoundly concerning the Trinity, if thou art without humility, and thereby displeasest that Trinity*?" And St. Augustine, upon the words of Isaiah, "I am the Lord that teacheth thee to profit," observes with great propriety, that the prophet here mentions utility in opposition to subtility†. Such are the principles I would wish to communicate to you; and it is my earnest desire and fervent prayer, that while I, according to my measure of strength, propose them to your understanding, he who sits in heaven, yet condescends to instruct the hearts of men on this earth, may effectually impress them upon your minds.

But that you may be capable of this supernatural light and heavenly instruction, it is, first of all, absolutely necessary, that your minds be called off from foreign objects, and turned in upon themselves; for as long as your thoughts are dispersed and scattered in pursuit of vanity and insignificant trifles, he that would lay before them the principles and precepts of this spiritual wisdom, would commit them, like the sybils prophecies, that were written on loose leaves of trees, to the mercy of the inconstant winds, and thereby render them entirely useless. It is certainly a matter of great difficulty, and requires uncommon art, to fix the thoughts of men, especially of young men and boys, and turn them in upon themselves. We read in the parable of the gospel concerning the prodigal son, that, first of all, *he came to himself*, and then returned to his father. It is certainly a very considerable step towards conversion to God, to have the mind fixed upon itself, and

* Quorsum alta de Trinitate disputare, si carcas humilitate, & sic Trinitate displiceas?

† Utilia non subtilia.

disposed to think seriously of its own immediate concerns; which the pious St. Bernard excellently expresses in this prayer, "May I," says he, "return from external objects to my own inward concerns, and from inferior objects rise to those of a superior nature*." I should look upon it as no small happiness, if, out of this whole society, I could but gain one, but wish earnestly I could prevail with many, and still more ardently that I could send you all away, fully determined to entertain more serious and secret thoughts than ever you had before, with regard to your immortal state and eternal concerns. But how vain are the thoughts of men! what a darkness overclouds their minds†! It is the great complaint of God concerning his people, *that they have not a heart to understand*‡. It is at once the great disgrace and misery of mankind, that they live without forethought‖. That brutish thoughtlessness§, pardon the expression, or, to speak more intelligibly, want of consideration, is the death and ruin of souls; and the antients observe, with great truth and justice, "that a thoughtful mind is the spring and source of every good thing**."

It is the advice of the Psalmist, that we should *converse much with ourselves:* an advice, indeed, which is regarded by few; for the greatest part of mankind are no where greater strangers than at home. But it is my earnest request to you, that you would be intimately acquainted with yourselves, and, as becomes persons devoted to a studious life, be much at home, much in your own company, and very often engaged in serious conversation with yourselves. Think gravely, to what purpose do I live? Whither am I going? Ask thyself, hast thou any

* Ab exterioribus ad interiora redeam, & ab inferioribus ad superiora ascendam.

† O vanas hominum mentes! O pectora cœca!

‡ Non habent cor ad cogitandum.

‖ Ἀπρονοήτως. § Ἀβουλία.

** Intellectus cogitabundus principium omnis boni.

fixed and determined purpose? Any end thou pursuest with stedfastness *? The principles I have embraced under the name of the Christian Religion, the things I have so often heard about a future state and life, and death eternal, are they true or false? If they are true, as we all absolutely profess to believe they are, then, to be sure, the greatest and most important matters of this world are vain, and even less than vanity itself: all our knowledge is but ignorance, our riches poverty, our pleasure bitterness, and our honours vile and dishonourable. How little do those men know, who are ambitious of glory, what it really is, and how to be attained! Nay, they eagerly catch at the empty shadow of it, while they avoid and turn their backs upon that glory which is real, substantial, and everlasting. The happiness of good men, in the life to come, is not only infinitely above all our expressions, but even beyond our most enlarged thoughts. By comparing, however, great things with small, we attain some faint notion of these exalted and invisible blessings, from the earthly and visible enjoyments of this world. In this respect, even the holy scriptures descend to the weakness of our capacities, and, as the Hebrews express it, "the law of God speaks the language of the children of men†." They speak of this celestial life, under the representations of an heritage, of riches, of a kingdom, and a crown, but with uncommon epithets, and such as are by no means applicable to any earthly glory, or opulence, however great. It is an inheritance, but one that is uncorrupted, undefiled, and that fadeth not away: a kingdom, but one that can never be shaken, much less ruined; which can never be said of the thrones of this sublunary world, as evidently appears from the histories of all nations, and our own recent experience. Here, ye sons of Adam, a covetous and ambitious race, here is room for a laudable avarice; here are motives to excite

* Est aliquid quo tendis, & in quid dirigis arcum?

† Lex Dei loquitur linguam filiorum hominum.

your ambition, and, at the same time, the means of satisfying it to the full: but it must be acknowledged, that the belief of these things is far from being common. What a rare attainment is faith! Seeing among the prodigious crowds of those who profess to believe, in this world, one might justly cry out, Where is a true believer to be found? That man shall never persuade me, that he believes the truth and certainty of heavenly enjoyments, who cleaves to this earth, nay, who does not scorn and despise it, with all its baits and allurements, and employ all his powers, as well as his utmost industry, to obtain these immense and eternal blessings.

Nor is there any thing in the way to these enjoyments that can deter you from it, unless holiness in heart and life appear to be a heavy and troublesome task to you: whereas, on the contrary, nothing surely can be named, that is either more suited to the dignity of human nature, more beautiful and becoming, or attended with greater pleasure. I therefore beseech and intreat you, by the bowels of divine mercy, and by your own most precious souls, that you would seriously consider these things, and make them your principal study; try an experiment, attended with no danger or expence, make a trial of the ways of this wisdom, and I doubt not but you will be so charmed with the pleasantness thereof, that you will never thenceforward depart from them. For this purpose, I earnestly recommend to you, to be constant and assiduous in prayer; nay, it is St. Paul's exhortation, *that you pray without ceasing*[1]. So that prayer may be, not only, according to the old saying, "the key that opens the day, and the lock that shuts up the night*; but also, so to speak, a staff for support in the day-time, and a bed for rest and comfort in the night; two conveniences which are commonly expressed by one single Hebrew word. And be assured, that the more fre-

[1] 1 Thes. v. 17. * Clavis diei, & sera noctis.

quently you pray, with so much the greater ease and pleasure will your prayers be attended, not only from the common and necessary connection between acts and habits, but also from the nature of this duty; for prayer, being a kind of conversation with God, gradually purifies the soul, and makes it continually more and more like unto him. Our love to God is also very much improved by this frequent intercourse with him; and by his love on the other hand, the soul is effectually disposed to fervency, as well as frequency in prayer, and can, by no means, subsist without it.

LECTURE II.

Of HAPPINESS, *its Name and Nature, and the Desire of it implanted in the Human Heart.*

HOW deep and dark is that abyss of misery, into which man is precipitated by his deplorable fall, since he has thereby lost, not only the possession, but also the knowledge of his chief or principal good? He has no distinct notion of what it is, of the means of recovering it, or the way he has to take in pursuit of it. Yet the human mind, however stunned and weakened by so dreadful a fall, still retains some faint idea, some confused and obscure notions of the good it has lost, and some remaining seeds of its heavenly original *. It has also still remaining a kind of languid sense of its misery and indigence, with affections suitable to those obscure notions: from this imperfect sense of its poverty, and these feeble affections, arise some motions and efforts of the mind, like those of one groping in the dark, and seeking rest every where, but meeting with it no where. This at least is beyond all doubt, and indisputable, that all men wish well to themselves, nay, that they all catch at, and desire to attain the enjoyment of the most absolute and perfect good: even the worst of men have not lost this regard for themselves, nor can they possibly divest themselves of it. And though, alas! it is but too true, that, as we are naturally blind, we run ourselves upon misery under the disguise of happiness, and not only embrace, according to the common saying, "a cloud instead of Juno †," but death itself instead of life; yet, even from this most fatal error, it is evident that we naturally pur-

* Cognati semina cœli. † Nubem pro Junone.

sue either real happiness, or what, to our mistaken judgment, appears to be such. Nor can the mind of man divest itself of this propension, without divesting itself of its being. This is what the schoolmen mean, when, in their manner of expression, they say, "That the will is carried towards happiness, not simply as will, but as nature*."

It is true, indeed, the generality of mankind are not well acquainted with the motions of their own minds, nor at pains to observe them, but, like brutes, by a kind of secret impulse, are violently carried towards such enjoyments as fall in their way: they do but very little, or not at all, enter into themselves, and review the state and operations of their own minds; yet in all their actions, all their wishes and desires (though they are not always aware of it themselves) this thirst after immortality exerts and discovers itself. Consider the busy part of mankind, hurrying to and fro in the exercise of their several professions, physicians, lawyers, merchants, mechanics, farmers, and even soldiers themselves; they all toil and labour, in order to obtain rest, if success attend their endeavours, and any fortunate event answer their expectations. Encouraged by these fond hopes, they eat their bread with the sweat of their brow: but their toil, after all, is endless, constantly returning in a circle; and the days of men pass away in suffering real evils, and entertaining fond hopes of apparent good, which they seldom or never attain: "Every man walks in a vain shew; he torments himself in vain[m]." He pursues rest and ease, like his shadow, and never overtakes them; but, for the most part, ceases to live before he begins to live to purpose. However, after all this confused and fluctuating appetite, which determines us to the pursuit of good, either real or apparent, as it is congenial with us, and deeply root-

* In beatitudinem fertur voluntas, non ut voluntas, sed ut natura.

[m] Psal. xxxix. 6.

ed in the human heart, so it is the great handle, by which divine grace lays hold, as it were, upon our nature, draws us to itself, and extricates us out of the profound abyss of misery, into which we are fallen.

From this it evidently follows, that the design of Sacred Theology is the very same with that of human nature, and "he that rejects it hates his own soul," for so the wise king of Israel emphatically expresses it. He is the most irreconcileable enemy to his own happiness, and absolutely at variance with himself; according to that of St. Bernard, "After I was set in opposition to thee, I became also contrary to myself *."

These considerations have determined me to begin these instructions, such as they are, which, with divine assistance, I intend to give you concerning the principles of the Christian religion, with a short disquisition concerning the chief or ultimate end of man. And here it is to be, first of all, observed, that the transcendent and supreme end of all is the *glory of God;* all things returning, in a most beautiful circle, to this, as the original source from which they at first took their rise; but the end of true religion, as far as it regards us, which is immediately connected with the former, and serves, in a most glorious manner, to promote it, is the salvation and happiness of mankind.

Though I should not tell you, what is to be understood by the term *happiness* or *felicity* in general, I cannot imagine any of you would be at a loss about it. Yet I shall give a brief explication of it, that you may have the more distinct ideas of the thing itself, and the juster notions of what is to be further advanced on the subject. Nor is there, indeed, any controversy on this head; for all are agreed, that by the terms commonly used in He-

* Postquam posuisti me contrarium tibi, factus sum contrarius mihi.

brew, Greek, and Latin * to express happiness or felicity, we are to understand *that perfect and complete good, which is suited and adapted to intelligent nature:* I say, *to intelligent nature*, because the brute creatures cannot be said to be happy, but in a very improper sense. Happiness cannot be ascribed to horses or oxen, let them be ever so well fed, and left in the full possession of liberty and ease. And as good in general is peculiar to intelligent beings; so, more especially, that perfect good, which constitutes felicity in its full and most extensive acceptation. It is true, indeed, in common conversation, men are very prodigal of this term, and, with extravagant levity, misapply it to every common enjoyment of life, or apparent good they meet with, especially such as is most suited to their present exigencies; and thus, as Aristotle, in his Ethics, expresses it, "The sick person considers health, and the poor man riches, as the chief good †." It is also true, that learned men, and even the sacred scriptures, give the name of felicity to some symptoms, and small beginnings of future happiness; but as we have already observed, this term, in its true and complete sense, comprehends in it that absolute and full perfection of good, which entirely excludes all uneasiness, and brings with it every thing that can contribute to satisfaction and delight. Consequently that good, whatever it be, that most perfectly supplies all the wants, and satisfies all the cravings of our rational appetites, is *objective felicity*, as the schools express it; and actual, or formal felicity, is the *full possession and enjoyment of that compleat and chief good.* It consists in a perfect tranquillity of the mind, and not a dull and stupid indolence, like the calm that reigns in the dead sea; but such a peace of mind as is lively, active, and constantly attended with the purest joy: not a mere

* אשרי in Hebrew, μακαριότης & ευδαιμονία in Greek, *felicitas & beatitude* in Latin.

† ὁνοσήσης, ὑγιείαν, καὶ ὁ πενομενα πλουτον.

absence of uneasiness and pain; but such a perfect ease as is constantly accompanied with the most perfect satisfaction, and supreme delight: and if the term had not been degraded by the mean uses to which it has been prostituted, I should not scruple to call it pleasure *. And, indeed, we may still call it by this name, provided we purify the term, and guard it by the following limitations; so as to understand by felicity, such a pleasure as is perfect, constant, pure, spiritual, and divine: for never, since I ventured to think upon such subjects, could I be satisfied with the opinion of Aristotle, and the schoolmen, who distinguish between the fruition of the chief good, which constitutes true felicity, and the delight and satisfaction attending that fruition; because, at this rate, that good would not be the ultimate end and completion of our desires, nor desired on its own account; for whatever good we wish to possess, the end of our wishing is, that we may enjoy it with tranquillity and delight: and this uninterrupted delight or satisfaction, which admits of no allay, is love in possession of the beloved object, and at the height of its ambition.

* Ἡ ἐυδαιμονία ἡδονὴ ἀμιγὴς βλαβῆς.

LECTURE III.

Of the HAPPINESS *of* MAN, *and that it is really to be found.*

YOU will not, I imagine, be offended, nor think I intend to insult you, because I have once and again, with great earnestness and sincerity, wished you and myself a sound and serious temper of mind; for, if we may represent things as they really are, very few men are possessed of so valuable a blessing. The far greater part of them are intoxicated either with the pleasures or cares of this world; they stagger about with a tottering and unstable pace; and, as Solomon expresses it, "The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them; because he knoweth not how to go to the city [m]." The heavenly city, and the vision of peace, which very few have a just notion of, or are at pains to seek after; nay, they know not what it is they are seeking; they flutter from one object to another, and live at hazard; they have no certain harbour in view, nor direct their course by any fixed star: but to him that knoweth not the port to which he is bound, no wind can be favourable; neither can he who has not yet determined at what mark he is to shoot, direct his arrow aright. That this may not be our case, but that we may have a proper object to aim at, I propose to speak of the chief end of our being.

And to begin at the Father of Spirits, or pure intelligences. God, blessed for ever, completely happy in himself from all eternity, is his own happiness. His self-sufficiency *, that eternal and infinite satis-

[m] Eccles. x. 15. * Αυτάρκεια.

faction and complacency he has in himself, is the peculiar and most complete felicity of that supreme Being, who derives his existence from himself, and has given being to every thing else; which Chrysostom has well expressed by saying, "That it is God's peculiar property to stand in need of nothing*." And Claudius Victor beautifully describes him, "as vested with all the majesty of creative power, comprehending in his infinite mind all the creatures to be afterwards produced, having all the revolutions of time constantly present to his all-seeing eye, and being an immense and most glorious kingdom to himself †."

Yet, all we can say of this primary, uncreated Majesty and felicity, is but mere talking to little or no sort of purpose; for here not only words fail us, but even thought is at a stand, and quite overpowered, when we survey the supreme, self-existent Being ‡, perfectly happy and glorious in the sole enjoyment of his own infinite perfections, throughout numberless ages, without angels, men, or any other creature: so that the poet had reason to say, "What eye so strong, that the matchless brightness of thy glory will not dazzle it, and make it close § ?"

Let us, therefore, descend into ourselves, but with a view to return to him again, and not only so, but in such a manner, that the end and design of our descending to enquire into our own situation be, that we may, with greater advantage, return and reascend to God: for, if we enquire into our own ultimate end, this disquisition must rise above all

* Θεῷ μάλιστα ἴδιον το ἀνίνδεες.

† Regnabatq; potens in majestate creandi,
Et facienda videns, gignendaq; mente capaci,
Secula despiciens, & quicquid tempora volvunt
Presens semper habens: immensum mole beatâ
Regnum erat ipse sibi.

‡ Αυθιαιτον τὸν ὀντα.

§ Τίνος ὄμμα σοφον
Ταῖς σαῖς γειροπαίς
Ἀνακοπτόμενον
Οὐ καταμύσει. Synos. Hym. Tert.

other beings, and at last terminate in him; because he himself is that very end, and out of him there is neither beginning nor end. The felicity of angels, which is an intermediate degree of happiness, we shall not insist on, not only because it is foreign to our purpose, but also because our felicity and theirs will be found upon the matter to be precisely the same.

With regard to our own happiness, we shall first shew, *that such happiness really exists*; and, next, enquire *what it is*, and wherein it consists. We assert then, that there is such a thing as human felicity: and this ought rather to be taken for granted as a matter unquestionable, than strictly proved. But when I speak of human felicity, I am well satisfied you will not imagine, I mean such a happiness as may be had from human things, but that I take the term subjectively, and understand by it the happiness of man. Now, he who would deny, that this is not only among the number of possibles, but actually attained by some part, at least, of the human race, would not only render himself unworthy of such happiness, but even of human nature itself; because he would thereby do all in his power to deprive it of its highest expectations, and its greatest honour: but, whoever allows, that all things were produced by the hand of an infinitely wise Creator, cannot possibly doubt, that man, the head and ornament of all his visible works, was made capable of a proper and suitable end. The principal beauty of the creation consists in this, that all things in it are disposed in the most excellent order, and every particular intended for some noble and suitable end; and if this could not be said of man, who is the glory of the visible world, what a great deformity must it be, how great a gap in nature *; and this gap must be the greater, that as we have already observed, man is naturally endued with strong and vigorous desires

* Μεγα χασμα.

towards such an end: yet on this absurd supposition, "all such desires and expectations would be vain, and to no purpose *;" and so something might be said in defence of that peevish and impatient expression, which escaped the Psalmist in a fit of excessive sorrow, and he might have an excuse for saying, "Why hast thou made all men in vain[1]?" This would not only have been a frightful gap in nature, but, if I am allowed so to speak, at this rate the whole human race must have been created in misery, and exposed to unavoidable torments, from which they could never have been relieved, had they been formed not only capable of a good quite unattainable, and altogether without their reach; but also with strong and restless desires towards that impossible good. Now, as this is by no means to be admitted, there must necessarily be some full, permanent, and satisfying good, that may be attained by man, and in the possession of which he must be truly happy.

When we revolve these things in our minds, do we not feel from within a powerful impulse exciting us to set aside all other cares, that we may discover the one chief good, and attain to the enjoyment of it? While we inhabit these bodies, I own we lie under a necessity of using corporeal and fading things; but there is no necessity that we should be slaves to our bellies and the lusts of the flesh, or have our affections glued to this earth: nay, that it should be so, is the highest and most intolerable indignity. Can it be thought, that man was born merely to cram himself with victuals and drink, or gratify the other appetites of a body, which he has in common with the brutes? to snuff up the wind, to entertain delusive and vain hopes all the days of his life, and, when that short scene of madness is over, to be laid in the grave, and reduced to his original dust? Far be it from us to draw such con-

* ὅτι κενην εἶναι ἡ ματαίαν τὴν ὄρεξιν. [1] Psal. lxxxix. 47.

clusions: there is certainly something beyond this, something so great and lasting, that, in respect of it, the short point of time we live here, with all its bustle of business and pleasures, is more empty and vanishing than smoke. "I am more considerable, says R. S. and born to greater matters, than to become the slave of my diminutive body *?" With how much greater truth might we speak thus, were we regenerated from heaven? Let us be ashamed to live with our heads bowed down, like groveling beasts gazing upon the earth, or even to catch at the vain and airy shadows of science, while, in the mean time, we know not, or do not consider, whence we took our rise, and whither we are soon to return, what place is to receive our souls, when they are set at liberty from these bodily prisons. If it is the principal desire of your souls to understand the nature of this felicity, and the way that leads to it, search the scriptures; for, from them alone, we all think, or profess to think, we can have eternal life. I exhort, and beseech you, never to suffer so much as one day to pass, either through lazy negligence, or too much eagerness in inferior studies, without reading some part of the sacred records, with a pious and attentive disposition of mind; still joining with your reading fervent prayer, that you may thereby draw down that divine light, without which spiritual things cannot be read and understood. But with this light shining upon them, it is not possible to express how much sweeter you will find these inspired writings, than Cicero, Demosthenes, Homer, Aristotle, and all the other orators, poets, and philosophers. They reason about an imaginary felicity, and every one in his own way advances some precarious and uncertain thoughts upon it; but this book alone shews clearly, and with absolute certainty, what it is, and points out the way

* Major sum, & ad majora genitus, quam ut sim mancipium mei corpusculi.

that leads to the attainment of it. This is that which prevailed with St. Augustine to study the scriptures, and engaged his affection to them. "In Cicero, and Plato, and other such writers, says he †, I meet with many things wittily said, and things that have a moderate tendency to move the passions; but in none of them do I find these words, Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

† Apud Ciceronem & Platonem, aliosque ejusmodi scriptores, multa sunt acute dicta, & leniter calentia, sed in iis omnibus hoc non invenio, Venite ad me, &c. MATT. xii. 28.

LECTURE IV.

In which it is proved that HUMAN FELICITY *cannot be found either in the earth, or earthly things.*

WE are all in quest of one thing, but almost all of us out of the right road: therefore, to be sure, the longer and the more swiftly we move in a wrong path, the farther we depart from the object of our desires: and if it is so, we can speak or think of nothing more proper and seasonable, than of enquiring about the only right way, whereby we may all come to see the *bright fountain of goodness* *. I know you will remember, that, on the last occasion, we proposed the most important of all questions, viz. that concerning our ultimate end, or the way to discover true happiness; to which we asserted, that all mankind do aspire with a natural, and therefore a constant and uniform ardour †; or rather, we supposed, that all are sufficiently acquainted with this happiness, nay, really do, or at least may feel it within them, if they thoroughly know themselves. For this is the end of the labours of men, to this tend all their toils; this is the general aim of all, not only of the sharp-sighted, but the blear-eyed and short-sighted ‡, nay, even of those that are quite blind; who, though they cannot see the mark they propose to themselves, yet are in hopes of reaching it at last: that is to say, though their ideas of it are very confused and imperfect, they all desire happiness in the obvious sense of the word. We have also observed, that this term, in its general acceptation, imports that full and perfect good which

* Boni fontem visere lucidum.

† Ἀδιατρέπτῳ ὁρμῃ. ‡ Μυωπαζοντες.

is suited to intelligent nature*. It is not to be doubted, but the felicity of the Deity, as well as his being, is in himself, and from himself; but our enquiry is concerning our own happiness. We also positively determined, that there is some blessed end suited and adapted to our nature; and that this can by no means be denied: for since all parts of the universe have proper ends suited and adapted to their natures, that the most noble and excellent creature of the whole sublunary world, should, in this, be defective, and therefore created in vain, would be so great a solecism, such a deformity in the whole fabric, and so unworthy of the supreme and all-wise Creator, that it can by no means be admitted, nor even so much as imagined. This point being settled, viz. that there is some determinate good, in the possession whereof the mind of man may be fully satisfied, and at perfect rest, we now proceed to enquire what this good is, and where it may be found.

The first thing, and at the same time a very considerable step towards this discovery, will be, to shew where, and in what things this perfect good is not to be found; not only because this point being settled, it will be easier to determine wherein it actually consists; nay, the latter will naturally flow from the former: but also because, as has been observed, we shall find the far greater part of mankind pursuing vain shadows and phantoms of happiness, and throughout their whole lives wandering in a great variety of bye-paths, seeking the way to make a proper improvement of life, almost always hunting for that chief good where it is not to be found. They must first be recalled from this rambling and fruitless course, before they can possibly be directed into the right road. I shall not spin out this negative proposition by dividing the subject of it into several branches, and insisting separately upon every one of them; but consider all these errors and mistakes, both vul-

* Πρῶτόν τε, ἰσχαῖόν τε, καὶ μέγιστον κακόν.

gar and practical, speculative and philosophical, however numerous they may be, as comprehended under one general head, and fully obviate them all by one single proposition, which, with divine assistance, I shall explain to you in this lecture, and that very briefly.

The proposition is, that human felicity, or that full and complete good that is suited to the nature of man, is not to be found in the earth, nor in earthly things.

Now, what if, instead of further proof or illustration, I should only say, if this perfect felicity is to be found within this visible world, or the verge of this earthly life, let him, pray, who hath found it out, stand forth: let him tell, who can, what star, of whatever magnitude, what constellation or combination of stars, has so favourable an aspect, and so benign an influence, or what is that singular good, or assemblage of good things in this earth, that can confer upon mankind a happy life? All things that, like bright stars, have hitherto attracted the eyes of men, vanishing in a few days, have proved themselves to be comets, not only of no benign, but even of pernicious influence: according to the saying, "There is no comet but what brings some mischief along with it*." All that have ever lived during so many ages, that the world has hitherto lasted, noble and ignoble, learned and unlearned, fools and wise men, have gone in search of happiness: has ever any of them all, in times past, or is there any at this day that has said, I have found it†? Different men have given different definitions and descriptions of it, and, according to their various turns of mind, have painted it in a great variety of shapes; but, since the creation of the world, there has not been so much as one that ever pretended to say, Here it is, I have it, and have attained the full possession of it. Even those, from whom most was to be expected, men of the utmost penetration, and most properly quali-

* ὐδεὶς γὰρ κομήτης ὅτις ὐ κακόν φέρει. † Ευρηκα.

fied for such researches, after all their labour and industry, have acknowledged their disappointment, and that they had not found it. But it would be wonderful indeed, that there should be any good suited to human nature*, and to which mankind were born, and yet that it never fell to the share of any one individual of the sons of men; unless it be said, that the things of life, in this respect, resemble the speculations of the schools; and that, as they talk about objects of knowledge that were never known, so there was some good attainable by men, which was never actually attained.

But to look a little more narrowly into this matter, and take a transient view of the several periods of life. Infants are so far from attaining to happiness, that they have not yet arrived at human life; yet, if they are compared with those of riper years, they are, in a low and improper sense, with regard to two things, innocence and ignorance, happier than men: for there is nothing that years add to infancy so invariably, and in so great abundance, as guilt and pollution; and the experience and knowledge of the world which they give us, do not so much improve the head, as they vex and distress the heart. So that the great man represented in the tragedy embracing his infant, who knew nothing of his own misery, seems to have had some reason to say, "That those, who know nothing, enjoy the happiest life†." And, to be sure, what we gain by our progress from infancy to youth is, that we thereby become more exposed to the miseries of life, and, as we improve in the knowledge of things, our pains and torments are also increased; for either children are put to servile employments, or mechanic arts; or, if they happen to have a more genteel and liberal education, this very thing turns to a punishment, as they are thereby subjected to rods, chastisements, and the power of parents and instructors, which is often a kind of petty tyranny; and, when the yoke is lightened

* Συμφυίς.

† Τὸ γιῶναι μηδὲν ἐστιν ἡδὺς βίος.

with the greatest prudence, it still seems hard to be born, as it is above the capacity of their young minds, thwarts their wishes and inclinations, and encroaches upon their beloved liberty.

Youth, put in full possession of this liberty, for the most part ceases to be master of itself; nor can it be so truly said to be delivered from its former misery, as to exchange it for a worse, even that very liberty. It leaves the harbour, to sail through quicksands and Syrens; and, when both these are passed, launches out into the deep sea. Alas! to what various fates is it there exposed? How many contrary winds does it meet with? How many storms threatening it with shipwreck? How many shocks has it to bear from avarice, ambition, and envy, either in consequence of the violent stirrings of those passions within itself, or the fierce attacks of them from without? And amidst all these tempests, the ship is either early overwhelmed, or broken by storms, and, worn out by old age, at last falls to pieces.

Nor does it much signify what state of life one enters into, or what rank he holds in human society; for all forms of business and conditions of life, however various you may suppose them to be, are exposed to a much greater variety of troubles and distresses, some to pressures more numerous and more grievous than others, but all to a great many, and every one to some peculiar to itself. If you devote yourself to ease and retirement, you cannot avoid the reproach and uneasiness that constantly attend an indolent, an useless, and lazy life. If you engage in business, whatever it be, whether you commence merchant, soldier, farmer, or lawyer, you always meet with toil and hazard, and often with heavy misfortunes and losses. Celibacy exposes to solitude; marriage, to solicitude and cares. Without learning you appear plain and unpolished; but, on the other hand, the study of letters is a matter of immense labour, and, for the most part, brings in but very little, ei-

ther with regard to the knowledge you acquire by it, or the conveniences of life it procures. But I will enlarge no farther; you find the Greek and Latin poets lamenting the calamities of life, in many parts of their works, and at great length: nor do they exaggerate in the least; they even fall short of the truth, and only enumerate a few evils out of many.

The Greek epigram, ascribed by some to Posidipus, by others to Crates the Cynic philosopher, begins thus, "What state of life ought one to chuse, &c. *?" and having enumerated them all, concludes in this manner, "There are then only two things eligible, either never to have been born, or to die as soon as one makes his appearance in the world †."

But now, leaving the various periods and conditions of life, let us, with great brevity, run over those things which are looked upon to be the greatest blessings in it, and see whether any of them can make it completely happy. Can this be expected from a beautiful outside? No; this has rendered many miserable, but never made one happy; for suppose it to be sometimes attended with innocence, it is surely of a fading and perishing nature, "the sport of time or disease ‡." Can it be expected from riches? Surely no; for how little of them does the owner possess, even supposing his wealth to be ever so great? What a small part of them does he use or enjoy himself? and what has he of the rest but the pleasure of seeing them with his eyes? Let his table be loaded with the greatest variety of delicious dishes, he fills his belly out of one; and if he has an hundred beds, he lies but in one of them. Can the kingdoms, thrones, and scepters of this world confer happiness? No; we learn from the histories of all ages, that not a few have been tum-

* Παην τοι βιότοιο τάμοις τρίβον, &c.

† Εϛ' αἰρω τοῖν δυοῖν ἔνος· αἵρεσις ἢ τό γενεσθαι μεδεποτ' ἢ θανεῖν αὐτίκα τικτομαινον.

‡ Χρόνου ἢ νόσου παιγνιον.

bled down from these by sudden and unexpected revolutions, and those not such as were void of conduct or courage, but men of great and extraordinary abilities; and that those who met with no such misfortunes, were still far enough from happiness, is very plain from the situation of their affairs, and in many cases from their own confession. The saying of Augustus is well known: "I wish I had never been married, and had died childless*:" and the expression of Severus at his death, "I became all things, and yet it does not profit me†." But the most noted saying of all, and that which best deserves to be known, is that of the wisest and most flourishing king, as well as the greatest preacher, who, having exactly computed all the advantages of his exalted dignity and royal opulence, found this to be the sum total of all, and left it on record for the inspection of posterity and future ages, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

All this may possibly be true with regard to the external advantages of men; but may not happiness be found in the internal goods of the mind. such as wisdom and virtue? Suppose this granted; still that they may confer perfect felicity, they must, of necessity, be perfect themselves. Now, shew me the man, who, even in his own judgment, has attained to perfection in wisdom and virtue: even those who were accounted the wisest, and actually were so, acknowledged they knew nothing; nor was there one among the most approved philosophers, whose virtues were not allayed with many blemishes. The same must be said of piety and true religion, which, though it is the beginning of felicity, and tends directly to perfection; yet, as in this earth it is not full and compleat itself, it cannot make its possessors perfectly happy. The knowledge of the most exalted minds is very obscure, and almost quite dark, and their practice of virtue lame and imper-

* ἄιθ' ὄφελον ἄγαμός τ' ἔμεναι ἀγονός τ' ἀπολέσαι.

† Πάντα ἐγενόμην κ) οὐ λυσιτελεῖ.

fect. And indeed who can have the boldness to boast of perfection in this respect, when he hears the great Apostle complaining of the law of the flesh, and pathetically exclaiming, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death, &c.[a]" Besides, though wisdom and virtue, or piety, were perfect, so long as we have bodies, we must, at the same time, have all bodily advantages, in order to perfect felicity. Therefore the Satyrist smartly ridicules the wise man of the Stoics, "He is," says he "free, honoured, beautiful, a king of kings, and particularly happy, except when he is troubled with phlegm *."

Since these things are so, we must raise our minds higher, and not live with our heads bowed down like the common sort of mankind; who, as St. Augustine expresses it, look for a happy life in the region of death †." To set our hearts upon the perishing goods of this wretched life, and its muddy pleasures, is not the happiness of men, but of hogs; and if pleasure is dirt, other things are but smoke. Was this the only good proposed to the desires and hopes of men, it would not have been so great a privilege to be born. Be therefore advised, young gentlemen, and beware of this poisonous cup, lest your minds thereby become brutish, and fall into a fatal oblivion of your original, and your end: turn that part of your composition, which is divine, to God its creator and father, without whom we can neither be happy, nor indeed be at all.

[a] Rom. vii. 24.

* ——————— Dives,
Liber honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum,
Præcipue fœlix, nisi cum pituita molesta est.

† Beatam vitam quærunt in regione mortis.

LECTURE V.

Of the IMMORTALITY *of the* SOUL.

THERE are many things that keep mankind employed, particularly business, or rather trifles; for so the affairs, which are in this world considered as most important, ought to be called, when compared with that of minding our own valuable concerns, knowing ourselves, and truly consulting our highest interests; but how few are there that make this their study? The definition you commonly give of man is, that he is a rational creature; though, to be sure, it is not applicable to the generality of mankind, unless you understand, that they are such, not actually, but in power only, and that very remote. They are, for the most part at least, more silly and foolish than children, and, like them, fond of toys and rattles: they fatigue themselves running about and sauntering from place to place, but do nothing to purpose.

What a wonder it is, that souls of a heavenly original have so far forgot their native country, and are so immersed in dirt and mud, that there are few men who frequently converse with themselves about their own state, thinking gravely of their original and their end, seriously laying to heart, that, as the poet expresses it, "Good and evil are set before to mankind*;" and, after mature consideration, not only think it the most wise and reasonable course, but are also fully resolved to exert themselves to the utmost, in order to arrive at a sovereign contempt of earthly things, and aspire to these enjoyments that are divine and eternal. For our parts, I am fully persuaded we will be of this mind, if we seriously

* Ωτι τοι ανθρωποισι κακον τ' αγαθόν τε τετυκται.

reflect upon what has been said. For if there is, of necessity, a complete, permanent, and satisfying good intended for man, and no such good is to be found in the earth or earthly things, we must proceed farther, and look for it somewhere else; and in consequence of this conclude, that man is not quite extinguished by death, but removes to another place, and that the human soul is by all means immortal.

Many men have added a great variety of different arguments to support this conclusion, some of them strong and solid, and others, to speak freely, too metaphysical, and of little strength, especially as they are as obscure, as easily denied, and as hard to be proved, as that very conclusion, in support of which they are adduced.

They who reason from the immaterial nature of the soul, and from its being infused into the body, as also from its method of operation, which is confined to none of the bodily organs, may easily prevail with those who believe these principles, to admit the truth of the conclusion they want to draw from them; but if they meet with any who obstinately deny the premisses, or even doubt the truth of them, it will be a matter of difficulty to support such hypotheses with clear and conclusive arguments. If the soul of man was well acquainted with itself, and fully understood its own nature; if it could investigate the nature of its union with the body, and the method of its operation therein, we doubt not, but from thence it might draw these, and other such arguments of its immortality; but since, shut up in the prison of a dark body, it is so little known, and so incomprehensible to itself; and since, in so great obscurity, it can scarce, if at all, discover the least of its own features and complexion, it would be a very difficult matter for it to say much concerning its internal nature, or nicely determine the methods of its operation. But it would be surprizing, if any one should deny, that the very operations it performs, especially those of the more noble

and exalted sort, are strong marks, and conspicuous characters of its excellence and immortality.

Nothing is more evident than that, besides life and sense, and animal spirits, which he has in common with the brutes, there is in man something more exalted, more pure, and that more nearly approaches to divinity. God has given to the former a sensitive soul, but to us a mind also; and, to speak distinctly, that spirit which is peculiar to man, and whereby he is raised above all other animals, ought to be called mind rather than soul*. Be this as it may, it is hardly possible to say, how vastly the human mind excels the other with regard to its wonderful powers, and, next to them, with respect to its works, devices, and inventions. For it performs such great and wonderful things, that the brutes, even those of the greatest sagacity, can neither imitate, nor at all understand, much less invent: nay man, though he is much less in bulk, and inferior in strength to the greatest part of them; yet, as lord and king of them all, he can, by surprising means, bend and apply the strength and industry of all the other creatures, the virtues of all herbs and plants, and, in a word, all the parts and powers of this visible world, to the convenience and accommodation of his own life. He also builds cities, erects commonwealths, makes laws, conducts armies, fits out fleets, measures not only the earth, but the heavens also, and investigates the motions of the stars. He foretels eclipses many years before they happen; and, with very little difficulty, sends his thoughts to a great distance, bids them visit the remotest cities and countries, mount above the sun and the stars, and even the heavens themselves.

But all these things are inconsiderable, and contribute but little to our present purpose, in respect of that one incomparable dignity that results to the human mind from its being capable of religion, and

* Animus potius dicendus est quam anima.

having indelible characters thereof naturally stampt upon it. It acknowledges a God, and worships him; it builds temples to his honour; it celebrates his never-enough exalted majesty with sacrifices, prayers, and praises, depends upon his bounty, implores his aid, and so carries on a constant correspondence with heaven: and, which is a very strong proof of its being originally from heaven, it hopes at last to return to it. And, truly, in my judgment, this previous impression and hope of immortality, and these earnest desires after it, are a very strong evidence of that immortality. These impressions, though in most men they lie over-powered, and almost quite extinguished by the weight of their bodies, and an evtravagant love to present enjoyments; yet, now and then, in time of adversity, break forth and exert themselves, especially under the pressure of severe distempers, and at the approaches of death. But those whose minds are purified, and their thoughts habituated to divine things, with what constant and ardent wishes do they breathe after that blessed immortality! how often do their souls complain within them, that they have dwelt so long in these earthly tabernacles! like exiles, they earnestly wish, make interest, and struggle hard to regain their native country. Moreover, does not that noble neglect of the body and its senses, and that contempt of all the pleasures of the flesh, which these heavenly souls have attained, evidently shew, that, in a short time, they will be taken from hence, and that the body and soul are of a very different, and almost contrary nature to one another: that therefore the duration of the one depends not upon the other, but is quite of another kind; and the soul, set at liberty from the body, is not only exempted from death, but, in some sense, then begins to live, and then first sees the light. Had we not this hope to support us what ground would we have to lament our first nativity, which placed us in a life so short, so destitute of good, and so crouded with miseries;

a life which we pass entirely in grasping phantoms of felicity, and suffering real calamities: so that, if there were not, beyond this, a life and happiness that more truly deserves these names, who can help seeing, that of all creatures man would be the most miserable, and, of all men, the best the most unhappy.

For although every wise man looks upon the belief of the immortality of the soul as one of the great and principal supports of religion, there may possibly be some rare, exalted, and truly divine minds, who would choose the pure and noble path of virtue for its own sake, would constantly walk in it, and, out of love to it, would not decline the severest hardships, if they should happen to be exposed to them on its account; yet it cannot be denied, that the common sort of Christians, though they are really and at heart sound believers and true Christians, fall very far short of this attainment, and would scarcely, if at all, embrace virtue and religion, if you take away the rewards; which, I think, the apostle Paul hints at in this expression, "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men the most miserable[b]." The apostle, indeed, does not intend these words as a direct proof of the immortality of the soul in a separate state, but as an argument to prove the resurrection of the body; which is a doctrine near akin, and closely connected with the former. For that great restoration is added as an instance of the superabundance and immensity of the divine goodness, whose pleasure it is, that not only the better and more divine part of man, which, upon its return to its original source, is, without the body, capable of enjoying a perfectly happy and eternal life, should have a glorious immortality, but also that this earthly tabernacle, as being the faithful attendant and constant companion of the soul, though all its toils and labours in this world, be also admitted to a share and participation of its

[b] 1 Cor. xv. 19.

heavenly and eternal felicity; that so, according to our Lord's expression, every faithful soul may have returned into its bosom, "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over[c]."

Let our belief of this immortality be founded entirely on divine revelation, and then, like a city fortified with a rampart of earth drawn round it, let it be outwardly guarded and defended by reason; which, in this case, suggests arguments as strong and convincing as the subject will admit of. If any one, in the present case, promises demonstration, "his undertaking is certainly too much*;" if he desires or expects it from another, "he requires too much‡." There are indeed very few demonstrations in philosophy, if you except mathematical sciences that can be truly and strictly so called; and, if we enquire narrowly into the matter, perhaps we shall find none at all; nay, if even the mathematical demonstrations are examined by the strict rules and ideas of Aristotle, the greatest part of them will be found imperfect and defective. The saying of that philosopher is, therefore, wise and applicable to many cases: "demonstrations are not to be expected in all cases, but so far as the subject will admit of them§." But, if we were well acquainted with the nature and essence of the soul, or even its precise method of operation on the body, it is highly probable we could draw from hence evident and undeniable demonstrations of that immortality which we are now asserting: whereas so long as the mind of man is so little acquainted with its own nature, we must not expect any such.

But that unquenchable thirst of the soul, we have already mentioned, is a strong proof of its divine nature: a thirst not to be allayed with the impure and turbid waters of any earthly good, or of all worldly enjoyments taken together. It thirsts after the

[c] Luke vi. 38.

* Μέγα λίαν το ἐπίχειρημα.

‡ Μέγα λίαν τό αἴτημα.

§ ἐκ ἐν πᾶσιν ἀποδείξεις ἀπήτηται, ἀλλ' ἐφ' ὅσον δέχεται τό ὑποκείμενον.

never-failing fountain of good according to that of the Psalmist, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks[c]:" it thirsts after a good, invisible, immaterial, and immortal, to the enjoyment whereof the ministry of a body is so far from being absolutely necessary, that it feels itself shut up, and confined by that, to which it is now united, as by a partition-wall, and groans under the pressure of it. And those souls, that are quite insensible of this thirst, are certainly buried in the body, as in the carcase of an impure hog; nor have they so entirely divested themselves of this appetite, we have mentioned, nor can they possibly divest themselves of it, so as not to feel it severely, to their great misery, sooner or later, either when they awake out of their lethargy within the body, or when they are obliged to leave it. To conclude: no body, I believe, will deny, that we are to form our judgement of the true nature of the human mind, not from the sloth and stupidity of the most degenerate and vilest of men, but from the sentiments and fervent desires of the best and wisest of the species.

These sentiments, concerning the immortality of the soul in its future existence, not only include no impossibility or absurdity in them, but are also every way agreeable to sound reason, wisdom, and virtue, to the divine œconomy, and the natural wishes and desires of men; wherefore most nations have, with the greatest reason, universally adopted them, and the wisest in all countries, and in all ages, have cheerfully embraced them. And though they could not confirm them with any argument of irresistible force, yet they felt something within them that corresponded with this doctrine, and always looked upon it as most beautiful and worthy of credit. "Nobody," says Atticus in Cicero, "shall drive me from the immortality of the soul*:" And Seneca's words are, "I took pleasure to enquire into the eternity of the soul, and even,

[c] Psm. xlii. 1. * Me nemo de immortalitate depellet.

indeed, to believe it. I resigned myself to so glorious an hope, for now I begin to despise the remains of a broken constitution, as being to remove into that immensity of time, and into the possession of endless ages*." O how much does the soul gain by this removal!

As for you, young gentlemen, I doubt not but you will embrace this doctrine, not only as agreeable to reason, but as it is an article of the Christian faith. I only put you in mind to revolve it often within yourselves, and with a serious disposition of mind; for you will find it the strongest incitement to wisdom, good morals, and true piety; nor can you imagine any thing that will more effectually divert you from a foolish admiration of present and perishing things, and from the allurements and sordid pleasures of this earthly body. Consider, I pray you, how unbecoming it is, to make a heaven-born soul, that is to live for ever, a slave to the meanest, vilest, and most trifling things; and, as it were, to thrust down to the kitchen a prince that is obliged to leave his country only for a short time. St. Bernard pathetically addresses himself to the body in favour of the soul, persuading it to treat the latter honourably, not only on account of its dignity, but also for the advantage that will thereby redound to the body itself. "Thou hast a noble guest, O flesh! a most noble one indeed, and all thy safety depends upon its salvation: it will certainly remember thee for good, if thou serve it well; and when it comes to its Lord, it will put him in mind of thee, and the mighty God himself will come to make thee, who art now a vile body, like unto his glorious one: and, O wretched flesh, he, who came in humility and obscurity to redeem souls, will come in great majesty to glorify

* Juvabat de æternitate animarum quærere, imo mehercule credere: dabam me spei tantæ, jam enim reliquias infractæ ætatis contemnebam, in immensum illud tempus, & in possessionem omnis ævi transiturus. SEN. Epis. 102.

thee, and every eye shall see him *." Be mindful, therefore, young gentlemen, of your better part, and accustom it to think of its own eternity; always and every where, having its eyes fixed upon that world, to which it is most nearly related. And thus it will look down, as from on high, on all these things, which the world considers as lofty and exalted, and will see them under its feet; and of all the things, which are confined within the narrow verge of this present life, it will have nothing to desire, and nothing to fear.

* Nobilem hospitem habes, O caro! nobilem valde, & tota tua salus de ejus salute pendet: omnino etiam memor erit tui in bonum, si bene servieris illi; & cum pervenerit ad Dominum suum, suggeret ei de te, & veniet ipse Dominus virtutum, & te vile corpus configurabit corpori suo glorioso, qui ad animas redimendas humilis ante venerat, & occultus, pro te glorificando, O misera caro, sublimis veniet & manifestus.

LECTURE VI.

Of the HAPPINESS *of the* LIFE *to come*

OF all the thoughts of men, there is certainly none that more often occur to a serious mind, that has its own interest at heart, than that, to which all others are subordinate and subservient, with regard to the intention, the ultimate and most desirable end of all our toils and cares, and even of life itself. And this important thought will the more closely beset the mind, the more sharp-sighted it is in prying into the real torments, the delusive hopes, and the false joys of this our wretched state; which is indeed so miserable, that it can never be sufficiently lamented: and as for laughter amidst so many sorrows, dangers and fears, it must be considered as downright madness. Such was the opinion of the wisest of kings: "I have said of laughter, says he, it is mad; and of mirth, what doth it[e]?" We have, therefore, no cause to be much surprised at the bitter complaints, which a grievous weight of afflictions has extorted, even from great and good men; nay, it is rather a wonder, if the same causes do not often oblige us to repeat them.

If we look about us, how often are we shocked to observe either the calamities of our country, or the sad disasters of our relations and friends, whom we have daily occasion to mourn, either as groaning under the pressures of poverty, pining away under languishing diseases, tortured by acute ones, or carried off by death, while we ourselves are, in like manner, very soon, to draw tears from the eyes of others; nay, how often are we a burden to ourselves, and groan heavily under afflictions of our

[e] Eccles. ii. 2.

own, that press hard upon our estates, our bodies, or our minds? Even those who seem to meet with the fewest and the least inconveniencies in this life, and dazzle the eyes of spectators with the brightness of a seemingly constant, and uniform felicity; besides, that they often suffer from secret vexations and cares, which destroy their inward peace, and prey upon their distressed hearts; how uncertain, weak, and brittle is that false happiness which appears about them, and, when it shines brightest, how easily is it broken to pieces: so that it has been justly said, "they want another felicity to secure that which they are already possessed of *." If, after all, there are some whose minds are hardened against all the forms and appearances of external things, and that look down with equal contempt upon all the events of this world, whether of a dreadful or engaging aspect, even this disposition of mind does not make them happy: nor do they think themselves so, they have still something to make them uneasy; the obscure darkness that overspreads their minds, their ignorance of heavenly things, and the strength of their carnal affections, not yet entirely subdued. And, though these we are now speaking of are by far the noblest and most beautiful part of the human race; yet, if they had not within them that blessed hope of removing hence, in a little time, to the regions of light, the more severely they feel the straits and afflictions, to which their souls are exposed by being shut up in this narrow earthly cottage, so much they certainly would be more miserable than the rest of mankind.

As oft, therefore, as we reflect upon these things, we will find that the whole comes to this one conclusion: "There is certainly some end †." There is, to be sure, some end suited to the nature of man, and worthy of it; some particular, compleat, and permanent good: and since we in vain look for it

* Alia felicitate ad illam felicitatem tuendam opus est.

† ἐστίν ἀρα τί τέλος.

within the narrow verge of this life, and among the many miseries that swarm on it from beginning to end, we must of necessity conclude, that there is certainly some more fruitful country, and a more lasting life, to which our felicity is reserved, and into which we will be received when we remove hence. This is not our rest, nor have we any place of residence here; it is the region of fleas and gnats, and while we search for happiness among these mean and perishing things, we are not only sure to be disappointed, but also not to escape those miseries, which, in great numbers, continually beset us; so that we may apply to ourselves the saying of the famous artist, confined in the island of Crete, and truly say, "The earth and the sea are shut up against us, and neither of them can favour our escape; the way to heaven is alone open, and this way we will strive to go*."

Thus far we have advanced by degrees, and very lately we have discoursed upon the immortality of the soul, to which we have added the resurrection of our earthly body by way of appendix. It remains that we now enquire into the happiness of the life to come.

Yet, I own, I am almost deterred from entering upon this enquiry by the vast obscurity and sublimity of the subject, which in its nature is such, that we can neither understand it, nor if we could, can it be expressed in words. The divine apostle, who had had some glimpse of this felicity, describes it no otherwise than by his silence, calling the words he heard, "unspeakable, and such as it was not lawful for a man to utter†." And if he neither could, nor would express what he saw, far be it from us boldly to force ourselves into, or intrude upon what we have not seen; especially as the same apostle, in another place, acquaints us, for our future

* Nec tellus nostræ, nec patet unda fugæ,
Restat iter cœli, cœlo tentabimus ire.

† ἄῤῥητα ῥήματα, ἃ, οὐκ ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι. 2 Cor. xii. 4.

caution, that this was unwarrantably done by some rash and forward persons in his own time. But since in the sacred archives of this new world, however invisible and unknown to us, we have some maps and descriptions of it suited to our capacity; we are not only allowed to look at them, but, as they were drawn for that very purpose, it would certainly be the greatest ingratitude, as well as the highest negligence in us, not to make some improvement of them. Here, however, we must remember, what a great odds there is between the description of a kingdom in a small and imperfect map, and the extent and beauty of that very kingdom when viewed by the traveller's eye; and how much greater the difference must be, between the felicity of that heavenly kingdom, to which we are aspiring, and all, even the most striking figurative expressions, taken from the things of this earth, that are used to convey some faint and imperfect notion of it to our minds? What are these things, the false glare and shadows whereof, in this earth, are pursued with such keen and furious impetuosity, riches, honours, pleasures? All these, in their justest, purest, and sublimest sense, are comprehended in this blessed life: it is a treasure, that can neither fail nor be carried away by force or fraud: it is an inheritance uncorrupted and undefiled, a crown that fadeth not away, a never-failing stream of joy and delight: it is a marriage-feast, and of all others the most joyous and most sumptuous; one that always satisfies, and never cloys the appetite: it is an eternal spring, and an everlasting light, a day without an evening: it is a paradise, where the lillies are always white and full bloom, the saffron blooming, the trees sweat out their balsams, and the tree of life in the midst thereof: it is a city where the houses are built of living pearls, the gates of precious stones, and the streets, paved with the purest gold; yet all these are nothing but veils of the happiness to be revealed on that most blessed day; nay, the light itself, which

we have mentioned among the rest, though it be the most beautiful ornament of this visible world, is at best but a shadow of that heavenly glory; and how small soever that portion of this inaccessible brightness may be, which, in the sacred scriptures, shines upon us through these veils, it certainly very well deserves that we should often turn our eyes towards it, and view it with the closest attention.

Now, the first thing that necessarily occurs in the constitution of happiness, is a full and complete deliverance from every evil, and every grievance; which we may as certainly expect to meet with in that heavenly life, as it is impossible to be attained while we sojourn here below. All tears shall be wiped away from our eyes, and every cause and occasion of tears for ever removed from our sight; there, there are no tumults, no wars, no poverty, no death, nor disease; there, there is neither mourning nor fear, nor sin, which is the source and fountain of all other evils: there is neither violence within doors, nor without, nor any complaint, in the streets of that blessed city; there, no friend goes out, nor enemy comes in. 2. Full vigour of body and mind, health, beauty, purity, and perfect tranquillity. 3. The most delightful society of angels, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and all the saints; among whom there are no reproaches, contentions, controversies, nor party-spirit, because there are, there, none of the sources whence they can spring, nor any thing to encourage their growth; for there is, there, particularly, no ignorance, no blind self-love, no vain-glory nor envy, which is quite excluded from those divine regions; but, on the contrary, perfect charity, whereby every one, together with his own felicity, enjoys that of his neighbours, and is happy in the one as well as the other: hence there is among them a kind of infinite reflection and multiplication of happiness, like that of a spacious hall adorned with gold and precious stones, dignified with a full assembly of kings and potentates, and having its

walls quite covered with the brightest looking glasses. 4. But what infinitely exceeds, and quite eclipses all the rest, is that boundless ocean of happiness, which results from the beatific vision of the ever blessed God; without which, neither the tranquillity they enjoy, nor the society of saints, nor the possession of any particular finite good, nor indeed of all such taken together, can satisfy the soul, or make it completely happy. The manner of this enjoyment we can only expect to understand, when we enter upon the full possession of it; till then, to dispute, and raise many questions about it, is nothing but vain foolish talking, and fighting with phantoms of our own brain. But the schoolmen, who confine the whole of this felicity to bare speculation, or, as they call it, an *intellectual act* *, are, in this, as in many other cases, guilty of great presumption, and their conclusion is built upon a very weak foundation. For although contemplation be the highest and noblest act of the mind; yet complete happiness necessarily requires some present good suited to the whole man, the whole soul, and all its faculties. Nor is it any objection to this doctrine, that the whole of this felicity is commonly comprehended in scripture under the term of vision; for the mental vision, or contemplation of the primary and infinite good, most properly signifies, or at least, includes in it the full enjoyment of that good; and the observation of the Rabbins concerning scripture-phrases, "That words expressing the senses, include also the affections naturally arising from those sensations †," is very well known. Thus, *knowing* is often put for approving and loving; and seeing for enjoying and attaining. "Taste and see that God is good," says the Psalmist; and, in fact, it is no small pleasure to lovers to dwell together, and mutually to enjoy the sight of one another. "No-

* Actus intellectualis† Verba sensus connotant affectus.

thing is more agreeable to lovers, than to live together *."

We must, therefore, by all means conclude, that this beatific vision includes in it not only a distinct and intuitive knowledge of God, but so to speak, such a knowledge as gives us the enjoyment of that most perfect Being, and, in some sense, unites us to him; for such a vision it must, of necessity, be, that converts that love of the infinite good, which blazes in the souls of the saints, into full possession, that crowns all their wishes, and fills them with an abundant and overflowing fulness of joy, that vents itself in everlasting blessings and songs of praise.

And this is the only doctrine, if you believe it, and I make no doubt but you do: This, I say, is the only doctrine that will transport your whole souls, and raise them up on high. Hence you will learn to trample under feet all the turbid and muddy pleasures of the flesh, and all the allurements and splendid trifles of the present world. However those earthly enjoyments, that are swelled up by false names, and the strength of imagination, to a vast size, may appear grand and beautiful, and still greater, and more engaging to those that are unacquainted with them; how small, how inconsiderable do they all appear to a soul that looks for a heavenly country, that expects to share the joys of angels, and has its thoughts constantly employed about these objects? To conclude, the more the soul withdraws, so to speak, from the body, and retires within itself, the more it rises above itself, and the more closely it cleaves to God, the more the life it lives, in this earth, resembles that which it will enjoy in heaven, and the larger foretastes it has of the first fruits of that blessed harvest. Aspire, therefore, to holiness, young gentlemen, "without which no man shall see the Lord."

* Οὐδὲν ἔστω τῶν φίλων ὡς τὸ συζῆν.

LECTURE VII.

Of the BEING *of* GOD.

THOUGH, on most subjects, the opinions of men are various, and often quite opposite, insomuch that they seem to be more remarkable for the vast variety of their sentiments, than that of their faces and languages; there are, however, two things, wherein all nations are agreed, and in which there seems to be a perfect harmony throughout the whole human race, *the desire of happiness*, and *a sense of religion*. The former no man desires to shake off; and though some, possibly, would willingly part with the latter, it is not in their power to eradicate it entirely; they cannot banish God altogether out of their thoughts, nor extinguish every spark of religion within them. It is certainly true, that for the most part this desire of happiness wanders in darkness from one object to another, without fixing upon any; and the sense of religion is either suffered to lie inactive, or deviates into superstition. Yet the great Creator of the world employs these two, as the materials of a fallen building, to repair the ruins of the human race, and as handles whereby he draws his earthen vessel out of the deep gulph of misery into which it is fallen.

Of the former of these, that is, felicity, we have already spoken on another occasion: we shall therefore now, with divine assistance, employ some part of our time in considering that sense of religion, that is naturally impressed upon the mind of man.

Nor will our labour, I imagine, be unprofitably employed in collecting together these few general principles, in which so many, and so very dissimilar forms of religion and sentiments, extremely different, harmoniously agree: for as every science, most properly, begins with universal propositions, and things more generally known; so in the present case, be-

sides the other advantages, it will be no small support to a weak and wavering mind, that amidst all the disputes and contentions subsisting between the various sects and parties in religion, the great and necessary articles, at least, of our faith are established, in some particulars, by the general consent of mankind, and, in all the rest, by that of the whole Christian world.

I would therefore most earnestly wish, that your minds, rooted and establised in the faith *, were firmly united in this delightful bond of religion, which, like a golden chain, will be no burden, but an ornament; not a yoke of slavery, but a badge of true and generous liberty. I would, by no means, have you to be Christians upon the authority of mere tradition, or education, and the example and precepts of parents and masters, but purely from a full conviction of your own understandings, and a fervent disposition of the will and affections proceeding therefrom; "for piety is the sole and only good among mankind †," and you can expect none of the fruits of religion, unless the root of it be well laid, and firmly established by faith; "for all the virtues are the daughters of faith ‡," says Clem. Alexand.

Lucretius, with very ill-advised praises, extols his favourite Grecian philosopher as one fallen down from heaven to be the deliverer of mankind, and dispel their distressing terrors and fears, because he fancied he had found out an effectual method to banish all religion entirely out of the minds of men, And to say the truth, in no age has there been wanting brutish souls, too much enslaved to their corporeal senses, that would wish these opinions to be true; yet, after all, there are very few of them, who are able to persuade themselves of the truth of these vicious principles, which, with great impudence, and

* Ἐῤῥιζωμενυς κὴ, βεβαιυμενυς ἐν πιςει. Colos. ii. 7.

† Ἓν γὰρ κὴ μόνον ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀγαθὸν ἡ ἐυσέβεια. Trismegist.

‡ Ἧσαι γὰρ ἀρεταὶ πίςεως θυγάτερες.

importunity, they commonly inculcate upon others: they belch out, with full mouth, their foolish dreams, often in direct opposition to conscience and knowledge; and what they unhappily would wish to be true, they can scarcely, if at all, belive themselves. You are acquainted with Horace's recantation, wherein he tells us, "That he had been long bigoted to the mad tenets of the Epicurean philosophy; but found himself at last obliged to alter his sentiments, and deny all he had asserted before*."

Some souls lose the whole exercise of their reason, because they inform bodies, that labour under the defect of temperament or proper organs; yet you continue to give the old definition of man, and call him *a rational creature;* and should any one think proper to call him *a religious creature,* he would, to be sure, have as much reason on his side, and needed not fear his opinion would be rejected, because of a few madmen, who laugh at religion. Nor is it improbable, as some of the ancients have asserted, that those few among the Greeks, who were called Atheists, had not that epithet because they absolutely denied the being of God, but only because they rejected, and justly laughed at the fictitious and ridiculous deities of the nations.

Of all the institutions and customs received among men, we meet with nothing more solemn and general than that of religion, and sacred rites performed to the honour of some deity; which is a very strong argument, that that persuasion, in preference to any other, is written, nay rather engraven, in strong and indelible characters upon the mind of man. This is, as it were, the name of the great Creator stamped upon the noblest of all his visible works, that thus man may acknowledge himself to be his; and (concluding, from the inscription he finds impressed upon his mind, that what belongs to God

* Parcus Deorum cultor, & infrequens
Insanientis dum sapientiæ
Consultus erro, &c. Od. xxxv. lib. 1.

ought, in strict justice, to be restored to him) be wholly reunited to his first principle, that immense ocean of goodness whence he took his rise *. The distemper that has invaded mankind is, indeed, grievous and epidemical: it cousists in a mean and degenerate love to the body and corporeal things; and in consequence of this, a stupid and brutish forgetfulness of God, though he can never be entirely blotted out of the mind. This forgetfulness a few, and but very few, alarmed, and awakened by the divine rod, early shake off; and even in the most stupid, and such as are buried in the deepest sleep, the original impression sometimes discovers itself, when they are under the pressure of some grievous calamity, or on the approach of danger, and especially upon a near prospect of death: then the thoughts of God, that had lain hid, and been long suppressed, forced out by the weight of pain, and the impressions of fear, come to be remembered, and the whole soul being, as it were, roused out of its long and deep sleep, men begin to look about them, enquire what the matter is, and seriously reflect whence they came, and whither they are going. Then the truth comes naturally from their hearts. The stormy sea alarmed even profane sailors so much, that they awaked the sleeping prophet; "Awake, say they, thou sleeper, and call upon thy God."

But however weak or imperfect this original, or innate knowledge of God may be, it discovers itself every where so far, at least, that you can meet with no man, or society of men, that, by some form of worship or ceremonies, do not acknowledge a Deity, and according to their capacity, and the custom of their country, pay him homage. It is true, some late travellers have reported, that, in that part of the new world called Brazil, there are some tribes of the natives, among whom you can discover no symptoms, that they have the least sense of a Deity:

* Τα τῦ Θεῦ τῳ Θεῳ.

cise to every well disposed mind, to reflect upon what a solid and unshaken foundation the whole fabric of religion is built, and to think and speak of the eternal fountain of goodness, and of all other beings, and consequently of his necessary existence; we reckon it will not be amiss to give a few thoughts upon it. Therefore, not to insist upon several arguments, which are urged with great advantage on this subject, we shall only produce one or two, and shall reason thus.

It is by all means necessary, that there should be some eternal being, otherwise nothing could ever have been; since it must be a most shocking contradiction to say, that any thing could have produced itself out of nothing. But if we say, that any thing existed from eternity, it is most agreeable to reason, that that should be an eternal mind, or thinking being, that so the noblest property may be ascribed to the most exalted being. Nay, that eternal being must, of absolute necessity, excel in wisdom and power, and, indeed, in every other perfection; since it must itself be uncreated, and the cause and origin of all the creatures, otherwise some difficulty will remain concerning their production: and thus all the parts of the universe, taken singly, suggest arguments in favour of their Creator.

The beautiful order of the universe, and the mutual relation that subsists between all its parts, present us with another strong and convincing argument. This order is itself an effect, and, indeed, a wonderful one; and it is also evidently distinct from the things themselves, taken singly; therefore it must proceed from some cause, and a cause endowed with superior wisdom; for it would be the greatest folly, as well as impudence, to say it could be owing to mere chance. Now it could not proceed from man, nor could it be owing to any concert or mutual agreement between the things themselves, separately considered; seing the greatest part of them are evidently incapable of consultation and concert: it must therefore proceed from

some one superior being, and that being is *God*, "who commanded the stars to move by stated laws, the fruits of the earth to be produced at different seasons, the changeable moon to shine with borrowed light, and the sun with his own *."

He is the monarch of the universe, and the most absolute monarch in nature: for who else assigned to every rank of creatures its particular form and uses, so that the stars, subjected to no human authority or laws, should be placed on high, and serve to bring about to the earth, and the inhabitants thereof, the regular returns of day and night, and distinguish the seasons of the year. Let us take, in particular, any one species of sublunary things, for instance man, the noblest of all, and see how he came by the form wherewith he is vested, that frame or constitution of body, that vigour of mind, and that precise rank in the nature of things, which he now obtains, and no other. He must, certainly, either have made choice of these things for himself, or must have had them assigned him by another; whom we must consider as the principal actor, and sole architect of the whole fabric. That he made choice of them for himself, nobody will imagine; for, either he made this choice before he had any existence of his own, or after he began to be: but it is not easy to say which of these suppositions is most absurd. It remains, therefore, that he must be indebted, for all he enjoys, to the mere good pleasure of his great and all-wise Creator, who framed his earthly body in such a wonderful and surprising manner, animated him with his own breath, and thus introduced him into this great palace of his, which we now behold; *where his manifold wisdom*, most properly so called, displays itself so gloriously

* ——— Qui lege moveri
Sidera, qui fruges diverso tempore nasci,
Qui variam Phœben alieno jusserit igne
Compleri, solemq; suo.

in the whole machine, and in every one of its *wonderfully variegated parts.*

The first argument, taken from the very being of things, may be farther illustrated by the same instance of man. For unless the first man was created, we must suppose an infinite series of generations from eternity, and so the human race must be supposed independent, and to owe its being to itself; but by this hypothesis mankind came into the world by generation, therefore every individual of the race owes its being to another; consequently the whole race is from itself, and at the same time from another, which is absurd. Therefore the hypothesis implies a plain and evident contradiction. "O! immense wisdom, that produced the world! Let us for ever admire the riches and skill of thy right-hand *;" often viewing with attention thy wonders, and, while we view them, frequently crying out with the divine Psalmist, "O! Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches[a]! From everlasting to everlasting thou art God, and besides thee there is no other[b]." And with Hermes, "The Father of all, being himself understanding, life and brightness, created man like himself, and cherished him as his own son. Thou Creator of universal nature, who hast extended the earth, who poisest the heavens, and commandest the waters to flow from all the parts of the sea, we praise thee, who art the one exalted God, for by thy will all things are perfected †." The same author asserts, that *God was prior to humid nature.*

* O! immensa, opifex rerum, sapientia! dextræ
Divitias artemq; tuæ miremur in ævum.

[a] Psm. civ. 24. [b] Psm. xc. 2.

* Ὁ πάντων πατὴρ ὁ νοῦς ὢν ζωὴ καὶ φῶς ἀπεκυήσει ἄνθρωπον ὃ ἠρασθη ὡς ἰδίου τόκου, Πάσης φύσεως κτίστης ὁ πήξας τὴν γῆν καὶ οὐρανον κρεμάσας καὶ ἐπιτάξας το γλυκύ ὕδωρ ἐξ αυτοῦ τοῦ ἀκεανοῦ ὑπαρχειν, ὑμνῶμεν σε τό πᾶν, καὶ τό ἐν, σοῦ γὰρ βουλουμενου παντα τελεῖται.

In vain would any one endeavour to evade the force of our argument, by substituting nature in the place of God, as the principle and cause of this beautiful order: for either, by nature, he understands the particular frame and composition of every single thing, which would be saying nothing at all to the purpose in hand; because it is evident, that this manifold nature, which in most instances is quite void of reason, could never be the cause of that beautiful order and harmony which is every where conspicuous throughout the whole system; or he means an universal and intelligent nature, disposing and ordering every thing to advantage. But this is only another name for God; of whom it may be said, in a sacred sense, that he, as an infinite nature and mind, pervades and fills all his works. Not as an informing form, according to the expression of the schools, and as the part of a compounded whole, which is the idlest fiction that can be imagined; for at this rate, he must not only be a part of the vilest insects, but also of stocks and stones, and clods of earth; but a pure unmixed nature, which orders and governs all things with the greatest freedom and wisdom, and supports them with unwearied and almighty power. In this acceptation, when you name nature, you mean God. Seneca's words are very apposite to this purpose. "Withersoever you turn yourself, you see God meeting you, nothing excludes his presence, he fills all his works: therefore it is in vain for thee, most ungrateful of all men, to say, thou art not indebted to God, but to nature, because they are, in fact, the same. If thou hadst received any thing from Seneca, and should say, thou owed'st it to Annæus or Lucius, thou would'st not thereby change thy creditor, but only his name; because, whether thou mentionest his name or surname, his person is still the same *."

* Quocunq; te flexeris, ibi Deum vides occurrentem tibi, nihil ab illo vacat; opus suum ipse implet: ergo nihil agis, ingratissime

An evident and most natural consequence of this universal and necessary idea of a God, is his unity; all that mention the term God, intend to convey by it the idea of the first most exalted, necessary existent, and infinitely perfect being: and it is plain, there can be but one being endued with all these perfections. Nay, even the polytheism, that prevailed among the heathen nations, was not carried so far, but that they acknowledged one God, by way of eminence, as supreme, and absolutely above all the rest, whom they stiled the greatest and best of Beings, and the Father of gods and men. From him all the rest had their being, and all that they were, and from him also they had the title of gods, but still in a limited and subordinate sense. In confirmation of this, we meet with very many of the clearest testimonies, with regard to the unity of God, in the works of all the heathen authors. That of Sophocles is very remarkable: "There is indeed," says he, "one God; and but one, who has made the heavens, and the wide extended earth, the blue surges of the sea, and the strength of the winds *."

As to the mystery of the sacred Trinity, which has a near and necessary connection with the present subject, I always thought it was to be received and adored with the most humble faith, but by no means to be curiously searched into, or perplexed with the absurd questions of the schoolmen. We fell by an arrogant ambition after knowledge, by mere faith we rise again, and are reinstated; and this mystery, indeed, rather than any other, seems to be a tree of knowledge, prohibited to us while we

mortalium, qui te negas Deo debere, sed naturæ, quia eidem est utrumq; officium. Si quid a Seneca accepisses, & Annæo te diceres debere vel Lucio, non creditorem mutares, sed nomen, quoniam sive nomen ejus dicas, sive prenomen, sive cognomen, idem tamen ipse est. SENECA, 4. de Benef.

* Εἷς ταῖς ἀληθειαισιν, εἷς ἐστὶν Θεός,
Ος οὐρανόν τ' ἔτευξε καὶ γαῖαν μακρὰν
Πόντου τε χαραπὸν οἰδμα καὶ ἀνεμῶν βίας.

sojourn in these mortal bodies. This most profound mystery, though obscurely represented by the shadows of the Old Testament, rather than clearly revealed, was not unknown to the most antient and celebrated doctors among the Jews, nor altogether unattested, however obstinately later authors may maintain the contrary. Nay, learned men have observed, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are expressly acknowledged in the books of the Cabalists, and they produce surprising things to this purpose out of the book of Zohar, which is ascribed to R. Simeon, Ben. Joch, and some other Cabalistical writers. Nay the book, just now mentioned, after saying a great deal concerning the Three in one essence, adds, "That this secret will not be revealed to all till the coming of the Messias*." I insist not upon what is said of the name consisting of twelve letters, and another larger one of forty-two, as containing a fuller explication of that most sacred name, which they call Hammephorash †.

Nor is it improbable, that some dawn, at least, of this mystery had reached even the heathen philosophers. There are some who think they can prove, by arguments of no inconsiderable weight, that Anaxagoras, by his νῦς, or mind, meant nothing but the son, or wisdom that made the world; but the testimonies are clearer, which you find frequently among the Platonic philosophers, concerning the *Three subsisting from one* ‡; moreover, they all call the *self-existent Being*, the *creating word*, or *the mind* and *the soul of the world* §. But the words of the Ægyptian Hermes are very surprising: "The mind, which is God, together with his word, pro-

* Hoc arcanum non revelabitur unicuique, quousq; venerit Messias.

† Maim. Mor. Nev. part. i. c. 16.

‡ Περὶ τριῶν ἐξ ἑνος ὑποστάντων.

§ Τὸ αὐτὸ, ὁν τον δημιυργον λογον, seu νῶν, καὶ τὴν τυ κόσμε ψυχην.

duced another creating-mind; nor do they differ from one another, for their union is life*."

But what we now insist upon is, the plain and evident necessity of one supreme, and therefore of one only principle of all things, and the harmonious agreement of mankind in the belief of the absolute necessity of this same principle.

This is the God, whom we admire, whom we worship, whom we entirely love, or, at least, whom we desire to love above all things, whom we can neither express in words, nor conceive in our thoughts; and the less we are capable of these things, so much the more necessary it is to adore him with the profoundest humility, and love him with the greatest intention and fervour.

* ὁ νῦς Θεὸς ἀπεκυησε λογῳ ἕτερον νῦν δημιυργὸν, ἀλλ' ὐ διίστανται ἀπ' ἀλληλῶν, ἕνωσις γὰρ τύτων ἐστὶν ἡ ζωή.

LECTURE VIII.

Of the WORSHIP *of* GOD, PROVIDENCE, *and the* LAW *given to* MAN.

THOUGH I thought it by no means proper to proceed without taking notice of the arguments, that served to confirm the first and leading truth of religion, and the general consent of mankind with regard to it; yet the end, I chiefly proposed to myself, was to examine this consent, and point out its force, and the use to which it ought to be applied; to call off your minds from the numberless disputes about religion, to the contemplation of this universal agreement, as into a more quiet and peaceable country, and to shew you, what I wish I could effectually convince you of, that there is more weight and force in this universal harmony and consent of mankind in a few of the great and universal principles, to confirm our minds in the sum and substance of religion, than the innumerable disputes, that still subsist with regard to the other points, ought to have to discourage us in the exercise of true piety, or, in the least, to weaken our faith.

In consequence of this, it will be proper to lay before you the other propositions contained in this general consent of mankind, with regard to religion. Now, the first of these being, "That there is one, and but one eternal principle of all things;" from this it will most naturally follow, "that this principle or Deity is to be honoured with some worship;" and from these two taken together, it must be, with the same necessity, concluded, "that there is a providence, or, that God doth not despise or neglect the world, which he has created, and man-

kind, by whom he ought to be, and actually is worshipped, but governs them with the most watchful and perfect wisdom.".

All mankind acknowledge, that some kind of worship is due to God, and to perform it is by all means worthy of man: and upon the minds of all is strongly impressed that sentiment which Lactantius expressed, with great perspicuity and brevity, in these words, "to know God is wisdom, and to worship him justice *."

In this worship some things are natural, and therefore of more general use among all nations, such as vows and prayers, hymns and praises; as also some bodily gestures, especially such as seem most proper to express reverence and respect. All the rest, for the most part, actually consist of ceremonies, either of divine institution or human invention. Of this sort are sacrifices, the use whereof, in old times, very much prevailed in all nations, and still continues in the greater part of the world.

A majesty so exalted, no doubt, deserves the highest honour, and the sublimest praises on his own account; but still if men were not persuaded that the testimonies of homage and respect, they offer to God, were known to him, and accepted of him, even on this account all human piety would cool, and presently disappear; and, indeed, prayers and vows, whereby we implore the divine assistance, and solicit blessings from above, offered to a God, who neither hears, nor, in the least, regards them, would be an instance of the greatest folly; nor is it to be imagined, that all nations would ever have agreed in the extravagant custom of addressing themselves to gods that did not hear.

Supposing, therefore, any religion, or divine worship, it immediately follows therefrom, that there is also a Providence. This was acknowledged of old, and is still acknowledged by the generality of all nations, throughout the world, and the most fa-

* Deum nosse, sapientia; colere, justitia.

mous philosophers. There were, indeed, particular men, and some whole sects, that denied it: others, who acknowledged a kind of Providence, confined it to the heavens, among whom was Aristotle, as appears from his book *de Mundo;* which notion is justly slighted by Nazianzen, who calls it a mere limited Providence*. Others allowed it some place in things of this world, but only extended it to generals, in opposition to individuals; but others, with the greatest justice, acknowledged that all things, even the most minute and inconsiderable, were the objects of it. "He fills his own work, nor is he only over it, but also in it †." Moreover, if we ascribe to God the origin of this fabric, and all things in it, it will be most absurd and inconsistent to deny him the preservation and government of it; for if he does not preserve and govern his creatures, it must be either because he cannot, or because he will not; but his infinite power and wisdom make it impossible to doubt of the former, and his infinite goodness of the latter. The words of Epictetus are admirable: "There were five great men," said he, "of which number were Ulysses and Socrates, who said that they could not so much as move without the knowledge of God ‡;" and in another place, "If I was a nightingale, I would act the part of a nightingale; if a swan, that of a swan; now that I am a reasonable creature, it is my duty to praise God §."

It would be needless to shew, that so great a fabric could not stand without some being properly qualified to watch over it; that the unerring course of the stars is not the effect of blind fortune; that what chance sets on foot is often put out of order, and

* Μικρόλογον πρόνοιαν.

† Opus suum ipse implet, nec solum præest, sed inest.

‡ Πεμπτοι δε ὧν ἦν καὶ ὀδυσσεὺς, καὶ Σωκράτες, οἱ λεγοντες ὅτι οὐδε σελήθω κινουμενος. ARRIAN. lib. i. cap 12. Περι Θεῶον, &c.

§ Ἐί μέν ἀηδών ημεν, ἐποίουν τά τῆς αηνδόνος, εἰ κύκνος τᾶ τοῦ κύκνου νῦν δε λογικος εἶμι ὑμνεῖν με δει τον Θεόν. Ibid. cap. 16.

soon falls to pieces; that, therefore, this unerring and regular velocity is owing to the influence of a fixed eternal law. It is, to be sure, a very great miracle, merely to know so great a multitude, and such a vast variety of things, not only particular towns, but also provinces and kingdoms, even the whole earth, all the myriads of creatures that crawl upon the earth, and all their thoughts; in a word, at the same instant to hear and see all that happens * on both hemispheres of this globe; how much more wonderful must it be, to rule and govern all these at once, and, as it were, with one glance of the eye. When we consider this, may we not cry out with the poet, "O thou great Creator of heaven and earth, who governest the world with constant and unerring sway, who biddest time to flow throughout ages, and continuing unmoved thyself, givest motion to every thing else, &c. †"

It is also a great comfort to have the faith of this Providence constantly impressed upon the mind, so as to have recourse to it in the midst of all confusions, whether public or private, and all calamities from without or from within: to be able to say, the great King, who is also my father, is the supreme ruler of all these things, and with him all my interests are secure; to stand firm, with Moses, when no relief appears, and to look for the salvation of God ‡ from on high, and, finally, in every distress, when all hope of human assistance is swallowed up in despair, to have the remarkable saying of the father of the faithful stamped upon the mind, and to silence all fears with these comfortable words, "God will provide." In a word, there is nothing that can so effectually conform the heart of man, and his inmost thoughts, and consequently the whole tenor of his

* Παντὸς ἐφορᾷν, καὶ παντὸς ἐπακούειν.

† O! qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas
Terrarum cœliq; sator, qui tempus ab ævo,
Ire jubes; stabilisq; manens das cuncta moveri, &c.
BOETH. de Can. Philosoph. lib. iii. metr. 9.

‡ Vere θεὸν ἀπὸ μηχανῆς.

life, to the most perfeet rule of religion and piety, than a firm belief, and frequent meditation on this divine Providence, that superintends and governs the world. He, who is firmly persuaded, that an exalted God of infinite wisdom and purity is constantly present with him, and sees all that he thinks or acts, will, to be sure, have no occasion to overawe his mind with the imaginary presence of a Lælius or a Cato. Josephus assigns this as the source or root of Abel's purity: "In all his actions, says he, he considered that God was present with him, and therefore made virtue his constant study*."

Moreover, the heathen nations acknowledge this superintendence of divine Providence over human affairs in this very respect, and that it is exercised in observing the morals of mankind, and distributing rewards and punishments. But this supposes some law or rule, either revealed from heaven, or stamped upon the hearts of men, to be the measure and test of moral good and evil, that is, virtue and vice. Man, therefore, is not a lawless creature †, but capable of a law, and actually born under one, which he himself is also ready to own. "We are born in a kingdom," says the Rabbinical philosopher, "and to obey God is liberty ‡." But this doctrine, however perspicuous and clear in itself, seems to be a little obscured by one cloud, that is, the extraordinary success which bad men often meet with, and the misfortunes and calamities to which virtue is frequently exposed. The saying of Brutus, "O! wretched virtue, thou art regarded as nothing, &c. §" is well known; as are also those elegant verses of the poet, containing a lively picture of the perplexity of a mind wavering, and at a loss upon this subject: "My mind," says he "has

* Πάσιν τοῖς ὑπό ἀυτῦ πραττομένοις παρεῖναιτον θεον νομίζων, αρετῆς προνοεῖτο. Antiq. lib. i. cap. 3.

† Ζῶον άνομον.

‡ In regno nati sumus, Deo parere, libertas.

§ ὦ τλήμων ἀρετὴ ὡς ὐδὲν, &c.

often been perplexed with difficulties and doubts, whether the gods regard the affairs of this earth, or whether there was no Providence at all, &c.—for when I considered the order and disposition of the world, and the boundaries set to the sea—I thence concluded, that all things were secured by the providence of God, &c.—But when I saw the affairs of men involved in so much darkness and confusion, &c. *"

But not to insist upon a great many other considerations, which even the philosophy of the heathens suggested, in vindication of the doctrine of Providence; there is one consideration of great weight to be set in opposition to the whole of this prejudice, viz. that it is an evidence of a rash and forward mind, to pass sentence upon things that are not yet perfect and brought to a final conclusion, which even the Roman stoic, and the philosopher of Cheronea insist upon, at large, on this subject. If we will judge from events, let us put off the cause, and delay sentence, till the whole series of these events come before us; and let us not pass sentence upon a successful tyrant, while he is triumphant before our eyes, and while we are quite ignorant of the fate that may be awaiting himself or his son, or at least his more remote posterity. The ways of divine justice are wonderful. "Punishment stalks silently, and with a slow pace; it will, however, at last overtake the wicked †." But, after all, if we expect another scene of things to be exhibited, not here, but in the world to come, the whole dispute,

* Sepe mihi dubiam traxit sententia mentem
Curarent superi terras, &c.
Nam cum dispositi quæsissem fœdera mundi
Præscriptosq; maris fines—
———— hinc omnia rebar
Consilia firmata Dei, &c.
Sed cum res hominum tanta caligene volvi
Aspicerem, &c.

CLAUDIAN in Rufinum, lib. i.

† Σιγᾷ κ᾽ βραδεῖ ποδὶ στειχουσα μάρψει τοὺς κακοὺς ὅταν τύχῃ.

concerning the events of this short and precarious life, immediately disappears, and comes to nothing. And to conclude, the consent of wise men, states, and nations on this subject, though it is not quite unanimous and universal, is very great, and ought to have the greatest weight.

But all these maxims we have mentioned, are more clearly taught, and more firmly believed in the Christian religion, which is of undoubted truth: it has also some doctrines peculiar to itself*, annexed to the former, and most closely connected with them, in which the whole Christian world, though by far too much divided with regard to other disputed articles, are unanimously agreed, and firmly united together; but of this hereafter.

* Κυρίας, δόξας.

LECTURE IX.

Of the Pleasure and Utility of RELIGION.

THOUGH the author of the following passage was a great proficient in the mad philosophy of Epicurus, yet he had truth strongly on his side, when he said, "That nothing was more pleasant than to be stationed on the lofty temples, well defended and secured by the pure and peaceable doctrines of the wise philosophers *."

Now, can any doctrine be imagined more wise, more pure and peaceable, and more sacred, than that which flowed from the most perfect fountain of wisdom and purity, which was sent down from heaven to earth, that it might guide all its followers to that happy place whence it took its rise? It is, to be sure, the wisdom of mankind to know God, and their indispensible duty to worship him: without this, men of the brightest parts, and greatest learning, seem to be born with excellent talents, only to make themselves miserable; and, according to the expression of the wisest of kings, "He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow †." We must, therefore, first of all, consider this as a sure and settled point, that religion is the sole foundation of human peace and felicity. This even the prophane scoffers at religion are, in some sort, obliged to own, though much against their will, even while they are pointing their wit against it; for nothing is more common to be heard from them, than that the whole doctrine of religion was invented by some wise men, to encourage the practice of

* ——— Bene quam munita tenere
Edita doctrinâ sapientum templa serena. LUCRET.

† Qui scientiam auget, auget cruciatum. ECCLES. i. 18.

justice and virtue through the world. Surely then religion, whatever else may be said of it, must be a matter of the highest value, since it is found necessary to secure advantages of so very great importance; but, in the mean time, how unhappy is the case of integrity and virtue; if what they want to support them is merely fictitious, and they cannot keep their ground but by means of a monstrous forgery? But far be it from us to entertain such an absurdity! for the first rule of righteousness cannot be otherwise than right, nor is there any thing more nearly allied, nor more friendly to virtue than truth.

But religion is not only highly conducive to all the great advantages of human life, but is also, at the same time, most pleasant and delightful. Nay, if it is so useful, and absolutely necessary to the interests of virtue, it must, for this very reason, be also pleasant, unless one will call in question a maxim universally approved by all wise men, "That life cannot be agreeable without virtue*:" a maxim of such irrefragable and undoubted truth, that it was adopted even by Epicurus himself.

How great, therefore, must have been the madness of that noted Grecian philosopher, who, while he openly maintained the dignity and pleasantness of virtue, at the same time employed the whole force of his understanding, to ruin and sap its foundations? For that this was his fixed purpose, Lucretius not only owns, but also boasts of it, and loads him with ill-advised praises, for endeavouring, through the whole course of his philosophy, to free the minds of men from all the bonds and ties of religion; as if there was no possible way to make them happy and free, without involving them in the guilt of sacrilege and atheism: as if to eradicate all sense of a deity out of the mind, were the only way to free it from the heaviest chains and fetters; though, in reality, this would be effectually robbing man of all his

* οὐκ εἶναι ἡδέως ζῆν ἄνευ τῆς ἀρετῆς.

valuable jewels, of his golden crown and chain, all the riches, ornaments, and pleasures of his life: which is inculcated at large, and with great eloquence, by a greater and more divine master of wisdom, the royal author of the Proverbs, who, speaking of the precepts of religion, says, "They shall be an ornament of grace unto thine head, and chains about thy neck[h]:" and of religion, under the name of wisdom, "If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hidden treasure[i]." Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold[k]." "Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting, get understanding[l]." And it is, indeed, very plain, that if it were possible entirely to dissolve all the bonds and ties of religion; yet, that it should be so, would, certainly, be the interest of none but the worst and most abandoned part of mankind. All the good and wise, if the matter was freely left to their choice, would rather have the world governed by the supreme and most perfect being, mankind subjected to his just and righteous laws, and all the affairs of men superintended by his watchful providence, than that it should be otherwise. Nor do they believe the doctrines of religion with aversion, or any sort of reluctancy, but embrace them with pleasure, and are excessively glad to find them true. So that, if it was possible to abolish them entirely, and any person, out of mere good-will to them, should attempt to do it, they would look upon the favour as highly prejudicial to their interest, and think his good-will more hurtful than the keenest hatred. Nor would any one, in his wits, chuse to live in the world, at large, and without any sort of of government, more than he would think it eligible to be put on board a ship without a helm or pilot, and, in this condition, to be tossed amidst rocks and

[h] Proverbs i. 9. [i] Ibid. ii. 4. [k] Ibid. xiii. 14. [l] Ibid. iv. 7.

quicksands. On the other hand, can any thing give greater consolation, or more substantial joy*, than to be firmly persuaded, not only that there is an infinitely good and wise Being, but also that this Being preserves and continually governs the universe, which himself has framed, and holds the reins of all things in his powerful hand; that he is our father; that we and all our interests are his constant concern; and that, after we have sojourned a short while here below, we shall be again taken into his immediate presence? Or can this wretched life be attended with any sort of satisfaction, if it is divested of this divine faith, and bereaved of such a blessed hope?

Moreover, every one, that thinks a generous fortitude and purity of mind, preferable to the charms and muddy pleasures of the flesh, finds all the precepts of religion not only not grievous, but exceeding pleasant, and extremely delightful. So that, upon the whole, the saying of Hermes is very consistent with the nature of things, "There is one, and but one good thing among men, and that is religion†." Even the vulgar could not bear the degenerate expression of the player, who called out upon the stage, "Money is the chief good among mankind‡; but should any one say, "Religion is the principal good of mankind§," no objection could be made against it; for, without doubt, it is the only object, the beauties whereof engages the love both of God and man.

But the principal things in religion, as I have frequently observed, are "Just conceptions of God." Now concerning this infinite Being, some things are known by the light of nature and reason, others only by the revelation which he hath been pleased to make of himself from heaven. That there is a

* Φεῦ τι τούτων χάρμα μεῖζον ἂν λαβοίς.

† ἐν καὶ μονον, εν ἀνθρώποις ἄγαθον ἡ ευσεβέια.

‡ Pecunia magnum generis humani bonum.

§ οὐκ ἐς' ἀντειπεῖν οὐδέν.

God, is the distinct voice of every man, and of every thing without him: how much more then will we be confirmed in the belief of this truth, if we attentively view the whole creation, and the wonderful order and harmony that subsist between all the parts of the whole system? It is quite unnecessary to shew, that so great a fabric could never have been brought into being without an all-wise and powerful Creator; nor could it now subsist without the same almighty Being to support and preserve it. "Let men therefore make this their constant study, says Lactantius, even to know their common parent and lord, whose power can never be perfectly known, whose greatness cannot be fathomed, nor his eternity comprehended*." When the mind of man, with its faculties, comes to be once intensely fixed upon him, all other objects disappearing, and being, as it were, removed, quite out of sight, it is entirely at a stand, and over-powered, nor can it possibly proceed further. But concerning the doctrine of this vast volume of the works of God, and that still brighter light, which shines-forth in the Scriptures, we shall speak more fully hereafter.

* Ut. Parentem suum, Dominumq; cognoscant, cujus nec virtus æstimari potest, nec magnitudo perspici, nec æternitas comprehendi.

LECTURE X.

Of the Decrees of God.

AS the glory and brightness of the Divine Majesty is so great, that the strongest human eye cannot bear the direct rays of it, he has exhibited himself to be viewed in the glass of those works, which he created at first, and by his unwearied hand, continually supports and governs; nor are we allowed to view his eternal counsels and purposes through any other medium but this. So that, in our catechisms, especially the shorter one, designed for the instruction of the ignorant, it might, perhaps, have been full as proper, to have passed over the awful speculation concerning the divine decrees, and to have proceeded, directly, to the consideration of the works of God; but the thoughts you find in it, on this subject, are few, sober, clear, and certain: and, in explaining them, I think it most reasonable and most safe, to confine ourselves within these limits, in any audience whatever, but especially in this congregation, consisting of youths, not to say, in a great measure, of boys. Seeing, therefore, the decrees of God are mentioned in our Catechism, and it would not be proper to pass over in silence a matter of so great moment, I shall accordingly lay before you some few thoughts upon this arduous subject.

And here, if any where, we ought, according to the common saying, to reason but in few words. I should, indeed, think it very improper to do otherwise; for such theories ought to be cautiously touched, rather than be spun out to a great length. One thing we may confidently assert, that all those things which the great Creator produces in different periods of time, were perfectly known to him, and, as it

were, present with him from eternity; and every thing that happens, throughout the several ages of the world, proceeds in the same order, and the same precise manner, as the eternal mind at first intended it should. That none of his counsels can be disappointed or rendered ineffectual, or in the least changed or altered by any event whatsoever: "Known to God are all his works*," says the Apostle in the council of Jerusalem; and the son of Sirach, "God sees from everlasting to everlasting, and nothing is wonderful in his sight†. Nothing is new or unexpected to him; nothing can come to pass that he has not foreseen; and his first thoughts are so wise, that they admit no second ones that can be supposed wiser. "And this stability, and immutability of the divine decrees‡," is asserted even by the Roman philosopher: "It is necessary," says he, "that the same things be always pleasing to him, who can never be pleased but with what is best§."

Every artist, to be sure, as you also well know, works according to some pattern, which is the immediate object of his mind; and this pattern, in the all-wise Creator, must necessarily be entirely perfect, and every way compleat. And, if this is what Plato intended by his ideas, which not a few, and these by no means unlearned, think very likely; his own scholar, the great Stagirite, and your favourite philosopher, had, surely, no reason, so often, and so bitterly, to inveigh against them. Be this as it may, all that acknowledge God to be the author of this wonderful fabric, and all these things in it, which succeed one another in their turns, cannot possibly doubt, that he has brought, and continues to bring them all about, according to that most

* Nota sunt Deo abi initio omnia sua opera, Act. xv. 18.

† A seculo in seculum respicit Deus, & nihil est mirabile in conspectu ejus.

‡ Τὸ ἀμεταβλητόν καὶ ακινητόν παρ θείων βουλευμάτων.

§ Necesse est illi eadem semper placere, cui nisi optima placere non possunt.

perfect pattern subsisting in his eternal councils; and these things, that we call casual, are all unalterably fixed and determined to him. For according to that of the philosopher, "Where there is most wisdom, there is least chance *," and therefore, surely, where there is infinite wisdom, there is nothing left to chance at all.

This maxim, concerning the eternal councils of the supreme Sovereign of the world, besides that it every where shines clearly in the books of the sacred Scriptures, is also, in itself, so evident and consistent with reason, that we meet with it in almost all the works of the philosophers, and often, also, in those of the poets. Nor does it appear, that they mean any thing else, at least, for the most part, by the term *fate:* though you may meet with some things in their works, which, I own, sound a little harsh, and can scarcely be sufficiently softened by any, even the most favourable interpretation.

But, whatever else may seem to be comprehended under the term *fate*, whether taken in the mathematical or physical sense, as some are pleased to distinguish it, must, at last, of necessity be resolved into the appointment and good pleasure of the supreme Governor of the world. If even the blundering astrologers and fortune-tellers acknowledge, that the wise man has dominion over the stars; how much more evident is it, that all these things, and all their power and influence, are subject and subservient to the decrees of the all-wise God? Whence the saying of the Hebrews, "there is no planet to Israel †."

And according as all these things in the heavens above, and the earth beneath, are daily regulated and directed by the eternal king; in the same precise manner were they all from eternity ordered and disposed by him, who "worketh all things according

* Ubi plus est sapientiæ, ibi minus est casus.
† Non esse planetam Israeli.

to the counsel of his own will *," who is more ancient than the sea and the mountains, or even the heavens themselves.

These things we are warranted and safe to believe; but what perverseness, or rather madness, is it to endeavour to break into the sacred repositories of heaven, and pretend to accommodate those secrets of the divine kingdom to the measures and methods of our weak capacities! To say the truth, I acknowledge that I am astonished, and greatly at a loss, when I hear learned men, and professors of Theology, talking presumptuously about the order of the divine decrees, and when I read such things in their works. Paul considering this awful subject, "as an immense sea, was astonished at it, and viewing the vast abyss, started back, and cried out with a loud voice, O! the depth, &c.†" Nor is there much more sobriety or moderation in the many notions that are entertained, and the disputes that are commonly raised about reconciling these divine decrees, with the liberty and free-will of man.

It is indeed true, that neither religion, nor right reason, will suffer the actions and designs of men, and consequently, even the very motions of the will, to be exempted from the empire of the counsel and good pleasure of God. Even the books of the heathens are filled with most express testimonies of the most absolute sovereignty of God, even with regard to these. The sentiments of Homer are well known ‡; and with him agrees the tragic poet Euripides, "O! Jupiter," says he, "why are we wretched mortals called wise? For we depend entirely upon thee, and we do whatever thou intendest we should §."

* Qui cuncta exequitur secundum consilium voluntatis suæ. EPHES. i. 11.

† Ὁ Παῦλος ὥσπερ πρὸς πέλαγος ἄπειρον ἰλιγγιάσας καὶ βαθὺς ἴδων ἀχανές, ἀπεπήδησεν εὐθέως καὶ μεγαλα ἀνεβόησεν, εἴπων, ὦ βαθος, &c. CHRYS.

‡ Τοῖος γὰρ νόος ἐστιν, &c.

§ Ὦ Ζεῦ τί δῆτα τοὺς ταλαιπόρους,
Φρονεῖν λέγουσι, σοὺ γὰρ ἐξηρτήμεθα,
Δρῶμεν, τε τοιαῦτ, ἂν σὺ τογχανῆς θέλων. IKET. l. 734.

And it would be easy to bring together a vast collection of such sayings, but these are sufficient for our present purpose.

They always seemed to me to act a very ridiculous part, who contend, that the effect of the divine decree is absolutely irreconcilable * with human liberty; because the natural and necessary liberty of a rational creature is to act or chuse from a rational motive, or spontaneously, and of purpose †; but who sees not, that, on the supposition of the most absolute decree, this liberty is not taken away, but rather established and confirmed? For the decree is, that such an one shall make choice of, or do some particular thing freely. And, whoever pretends to deny, that whatever is done or chosen, whether good or indifferent, is so done or chosen, or, at least, may be so, espouses an absurdity. But, in a word, the great difficulty in all this dispute is, that with regard to the *origin of evil.* Some distinguish, and justly, the substance of the action, as you call it, or that which is physical in the action, from the morality of it. This is of some weight, but whether it takes away the whole difficulty, I will not pretend to say. Believe me, young gentlemen, it is an abyss, it is an abyss never to be perfectly sounded by any plummet of human understanding. Should any one say, "I am not to be blamed, but Jove and fate ‡," he will not get off so, but may be nonplussed by turning his own wit against him; the servant of Zeno, the Stoic philosopher, being catched in an act of theft, either with a design to ridicule his master's doctrine, or to avail himself of it, in order to evade punishment, said, "It was my fate to be a thief; and to be punished for it, said Zeno §." Wherefore, if you will take my advice, withdraw your minds from a curious search into this mystery, and turn them directly to the study

* ἀμφισβῆτησις pugnare.

† Τὸ ἑκούσιον βουλήσεως.

‡ οὐκ ἐγὼ αἴτιος εἰμί, ἀλλὰ ζεὺς καὶ μοῖρα.

§ In fatis mihi, inquit, fuit furari. Et cædi, inquit Zeno.

of piety, and a due reverence to the awful majesty of of God. Think and speak of God and his secrets with fear and trembling, but dispute very little about them; and, if you would not undo yourselves, beware of disputing with him, if you transgress in any thing, blame yourselves; if you do any good, or repent of evil, offer thanksgiving to God. This is what I earnestly recommend to you, in this I acquiesce myself; and to this, when much tossed and distressed with doubt and difficulties, I had recourse, as to a safe harbour. If any of you think proper, he may apply to men of greater learning; but let him take care, he meet not with such as have more forwardness and presumption.

LECTURE XI.

Of the CREATION *of the* WORLD.

WHOEVER looks upon this great system of the universe, of which he himself is but a very small part, with a little more than ordinary attention, unless his mind is become quite brutish within him, it will, of necessity, put him upon considering whence this beautiful frame of things proceeded, and what was its first original; or, in the words of the poet, "From what principles all the elements were formed, and how the various parts of the world at first came together*."

Now, as we have already observed in our dissertation concerning God, that the mind rises directly from the consideration of this visible world, to that of its invisible Creator; so from the contemplation of the first and infinite mind, it descends to this visible fabric; and again, the contemplation of this latter, determines it to return with the greatest pleasure and satisfaction to that eternal fountain of goodness, and of every thing that exists. Nor is this a vicious and faulty circle, but the constant course of a pious soul travelling, as it were, backwards and forwards from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth; a notion quite similar to that of the angels ascending and descending upon the ladder which Jacob saw in his vision. But this contemplation, by all means, requires a pure and divine temper of mind, according to the maxims of the philosopher: "He that would see God and goodness, must first be himself good, and like the Deity †." And those, who have the eyes of their

* ——————— Quibusq; exordia primis
Omnia, & ipse tener mundi concreverit orbis. VIR. Ecl. vi.

† Γενισθω δε πρωτον θειοειδης πας ὁ μελλων θεασασθαι θεον τε και καλον. Plot.

minds pure and bright, will sooner be able to read in those objects that are exposed to the outward eye, the great and evident characters of his eternal power and godhead.

We shall therefore now advance some thoughts upon the creation, which was the first and most stupendous of all the divine works: and the rather, that some of the philosophers, who were, to be sure, positive in asserting the being of a God, did not acknowledge him to be the author or Creator of the world. As for us, according to that of the epistle to the Hebrews, "by faith we understand, that the worlds were framed by the word of God*." Of this we have a distinct history in the first book of Moses, and of the sacred scripture, which we receive as divine. And this same doctrine the prophets and apostles, and, together with them, all the sacred writers, frequently repeat in their sermons and writings, as the great foundation of faith, and of all true religion; for which reason, it ought to be diligently inculcated upon the minds of all, even those of the most ignorant, as far as they are able to conceive and believe it; though, to be sure, it contains in it so many mysteries, that they are sufficient not only to exercise the most acute and learned understandings, but even far exceed their capacities, and quite overpower them; which the Jewish doctors seem to have been so sensible, or, if I may use the expression, so over sensible of, that they admitted not their disciples to look into the three first chapters of Genesis, till they arrived at the age required for entering on the priestly office.

Although the faith of this doctrine immediately depends upon the authority and testimony of the Supreme God of truth, for, as St. Ambrose expresses it, "To whom should I give greater credit concerning God, than to God himself†?" It is however so agreeable to reason, that if any one chuse to

* Πίστει νοοῦμεν κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας ῥήματι Θεοῦ. Cap. xi. 3.

† Cui enim magis de Deo, quam Deo credam. Ambros.

enter into the dispute, he will find the strongest arguments presenting themselves in confirmation of the faith of it; but those on the opposite side, if any such there be that deserve the name, quite frivolus, and of no manner of force. Tatian declared, that no argument more effectually determined him to believe the scriptures, and embrace the Christian faith, "than the consistent intelligible account they gave of the creation of the universe *."

Let any one that pleases, chuse what other opinion he will adopt upon this subject, or as it is a matter of doubt and obscurity, any of the other hypotheses he thinks most feasible. Is he for the atoms of Epicurus, dancing at random in an empty space, and, after innumerable trials, throwing themselves at last into the beautiful fabric which we behold, and that merely by a kind of lucky hit, or fortunate throw of the dice, without any Amphion with his harp, to charm them by his music, and lead them into the building? To say the truth, the Greek philosopher had dreamed these things very prettily, or, according to more probable accounts, borrowed them from two other blundering philosophers, Democritus and Leucippus, though he used all possible art to conceal it, that he might have to himself the whole glory of this noble invention. But whoever first invented, or published this hypothesis, how, pray, will he persuade us that things are actually so? By what convincing arguments will he prove them? Or what credible witnesses will he produce to attest his facts? For it would neither be modest nor decent, for him nor his followers, to expect implicit faith in a matter purely philosophical and physical, and at the same time of so great importance, especially as it is their common method smartly to ridicule and superciliously to despise the rest of mankind, as being, according to their opinion, too credulous in matters of religion. But what we have now said is more than

* Τὸ ἰυκαλαλήπτου τῆς τῦ παντὸς ποιήσεως. Tatian.

enough upon an hypothesis so silly, monstrous and inconsistent.

After leaving the Epicureans, there is no other noted shift that I know of, remaining for one that rejects the doctrine of the creation, but only that fiction of the Peripatetic school, concerning the eternity of the world. This Aristotle is said to have borrowed from a Pythagorean philosopher, named Ocellus Lucanus, who, in that instance, seems to have deserted not only the doctrine of his master Pythagoras, but also that of all the more ancient philosophers. It is true, two or three others are named, Parmenio, Melissus, &c. who are suspected to have been of the same sentiments with Ocellus; but this is a matter of uncertainty, and therefore to be left undetermined. And, indeed, both Aristotle and Ocellus seems to have done this at random, or without proof, as they have advanced no arguments in favour of their new doctrine, that can be thought very favourable, much less cogent and convincing.

It is surely impossible to demonstrate the truth of their opinion *a priori*, nor did these authors attempt it. They only endeavoured to muster up some difficulties against the production of the world in time, the great weakness whereof any one, who is but tolerably acquainted with the Christian religion, will easily perceive. Aristotle's arguments rather make against some notions espoused by the old philosophers, or rather forged by himself, than against the doctrine of the creation. Nay, he himself sometimes speaks with great diffidence of his own opinion on this subject, particularly in his topics, where, among other logical problems, he proposes this as one, viz. "Whether the world existed from eternity or not *."

On the contrary, besides that the world has evident marks of novelty, as is acknowledged by Lucretius in a remarkable passage of his poems, which is very well known, "Besides, says he, if the earth

* πότερον ὁ κόσμος ἀΐδιος, ἢ οὔ

and the heavens were not originally created, but existed from eternity, why did not earlier poets describe the remarkable actions of their times long before the Theban war and the destruction of Troy? But, in my opinion, the universe is not of old standing, the world is but of late establisment, and it is not long since it had its beginning," and more to that purpose *.

If we duly consider the matter, and acknowledge the course of the stars, not only to be owing to a first mover, but also that the whole fabric, with all the creatures therein, derive their existence from some Supreme Mind, who is the only fountain of being; we must certainly conclude, that that self-existent principle, or source of all Beings, is by all means eternal; but there is no necessity at all, that we should suppose all other things to be coeveal with it; nay, if it is not absolutely necessary, it is at least highly reasonable and consistent to believe the contrary.

For, that this world, compounded of so many, and such heterogeneous parts, should proceed, by way of natural and necessary emanation, from that one first, purest, and most simple nature; nobody, I imagine, could believe, or in the least suspect: can it possibly be thought, that mortality should proceed from the immortal, corruption from the incorruptible, and, what ought never to be so much as mentioned, even worms, the vilest animalcules, and most abject insects, from the best, most exalted, and most blessed Majesty? But, if he produced all these things freely, merely out of his good pleasure, and with the facility that constantly attends almighty power; how much more consistent is it to believe, that this

* Præterea sinulla fuit genitalis origo
Terræ & Cœli, semperq; æterna fuere;
Cur supra bellum Thebanum & funera Trojæ,
Non alias alii quoque res cecinere Poetæ,
Verum, ut opinor, habet novitatem summa, recensq;
Natura est mundi, neq; pridem exordia cepit.

was done in time, than to imagine it was from eternity?

It is a very difficult matter to argue at all about that, the nature whereof our most enlarged thoughts can never comprehend. And though, among philosophers and divines, it is disputed, whether such a production from eternity is possible or not; there is probably something concealed in the nature of the thing, though unknown to us, that might suggest a demonstration of the impossibility of this conceit; for what is finite, in bulk, power, and every other respect, seems scarcely capable of this infinity of duration; and divines generally place eternity among the incommunicable attributes of God, as they are called: it seems, to be sure, most agreeable to reason, and, for ought we know, it is absolutely necessary, that in all external productions, by a free agent, the cause should be, even in time, prior to the effect, that is, that there must have been some point of time wherein the being producing did, but the thing produced did not exist. As to the eternal generation, which we believe, it is within God himself, nor does it constitute any thing without him, or different from his nature and essence. Moreover, the external production of a created being, of a nature vastly different from the agent, that is supposed to produce it, and to act freely in that production, implies, in its formal conception, as the schools expreess it, a translation from non-entity into being; whence it seems necessary to follow, that their must have been some point of time, wherein that created being did not exist.

The notions of the Platonists, concerning pre-existent matter, do not concern the present subject; but, to be sure, they are as idle and empty as the imaginary eternity of the world in its present form. As angels were not produced out of matter, it is surely surprising that those, who assert their creation by God, should find difficulty in acknowledg-

ing the production of other things, without pre-existent matter, or even of matter itself. The celebrated maxim of the philosophers, "That out of nothing nothing is produced," we receive, but in a different and sounder sense, viz. that nothing can be produced but either from pre-existent matter, or by a productive power, in which it was virtually contained. And, in this sense, this famous maxim affords an invincible demonstration *a posteriori*, for the subject is not capable of any other, to prove that there must be some being that existed before any creature, and the unity and eternity of that being.

The great Creator of the world, having all things virtually in himself, needed neither matter nor instruments in order to produce them: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth*." These were his levers and tools, the word of the Lord, or that effectual act of his will, which gave being to all things †. "The mighty Lord of all called directly to his holy, intelligent, and creating word, let there be a sun, and a sun immediately appeared, &c. ‡." Here he spoke, and it was done, "the word and the effect shewed themselves together §." If you ask what moved infinite goodness to perform this great work; I answer, that very goodness you mention: for, if as they say, it is the nature of goodness to be always communicative; that goodness, to be sure, must be the most diffusive, which is in itself greatest, richest, and so very immense, that it cannot be in the least diminished, much less exhausted, by the greatest munificence. Here there is no danger that that should happen, which Cicero prudently cautions against, in the case of human goodness, viz. "That liberality should undo

* Psal. xxxiii. 6. † Παυλαρκὴς.

‡ Ὁ δὲ πάνλων κύριος ἐυθέως ἐφώνησε τῷ ἑαυτοῦ ἁγίῳ καὶ νοητῷ καὶ δημιουργικῷ λόγῳ ἔστω ἥλιος· καὶ ἅμα τῷ φάναι, &c. Trismeg.

§ ἅμα εἶπε, ἅμα ἔργον.

itself*." For that liberality must be immortal and endless the treasures whereof are infinite.

Nor is it to be doubted, but from this very goodness, together with the immense power and wisdom, which shine forth so brightly in the creation and all the creatures, an immense weight of glory is reflected upon the Creator himself, and the source of all these perfections; nor must it be denied, that the manifold wisdom of God proposed this end likewise. And there is nothing more certain than that, from all these taken together, his works, his benevolent and diffusive goodness, his power and wisdom illustrated in the creation, and the glory that continually results therefrom, from his wise counsels, and his own most perfect nature, whence all these things flow; nothing is more certain, I say, than that, from all these taken together, the divine Majesty enjoys an eternal and inexpressible delight and satisfaction: and thus all things return to that vast and immense ocean, from whence they at first took their rise, according to the expression in the Proverbs, "He hath made all things for himself[m]:" and the words of the song in the Revelations, are most express to this purpose, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created[n]." Nor could it indeed be otherwise, than that he, who is the beginning of all things, should also be the end of all; a wonderful beginning without a beginning, and an end without an end. So that, as the author of the epistle to the Hebrews reasons concerning the oath of God: "As he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself." In like manner we may argue here, as he could propose no greater end or design, he proposed himself. It was the saying of Epicurus, "That the wise man does every thing for his own

* Ne liberalitate pereat liberalitas.

[m] Prov. xvi. 4. [n] Rev. iv. 11.

sake*:" we, who are otherwise taught, should rather say, that the wise man does nothing for his own sake, but all for that of God. But the most exalted, to be sure, and the wisest of all beings, because he is so, must of necessity do all things for himself; yet, at the same time, all his dispensations, towards his creatures, are most bountiful and benevolent.

That the world was made directly and immediately for man, is the doctrine not only of the Stoics, but also of the master of the Peripatetic school: "We are, says he, in some respect, the end of all things†." And in another place, "Nature has made all things for the sake of man‡." Cicero speaks to the same purpose§; and Lactantius more fully than either‖. But Moses gives the greatest light on this subject, not only in his history of the creation, but also in Deuteronomy, wherein he warns the Israelites against worshipping of angels: for this reason; because, says he, "they were created for the service of man[k]:" and the sun, in Hebrew, is called Shemesh, which signifies a servant.

But O! whither do our hearts stray! ought we not to dwell upon this pleasant contemplation, and even die in it? I should chuse to be quite lost in it, and to be rendered altogether insensible, and, as it were, dead to these earthly trifles, that make a noise around us. O sweet reciprocation of mutual delights! "The Lord shall rejoice in his works[l]," says the Psalmist: and presently after, "My meditation of him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord[m]." Let us look sometimes to the heavens, sometimes to the sea, and the earth, with the animals and plants that are therein, and very often

* Sapientem omnia facere sui causa.

† Sumus enim et nos quodammodo omnium finis. 2 Phys. tit. 23.

‡ Natura hominum gratia omnia fecit.

§ De legibus.

‖ Sol irrequietis cursibus & spatiis inequalibus orbes conficit, &c. ad finem capitis, De ira Dei. Cap. 13. 14.

[k] Deut. [l] Psal. civ. 31. [m] Ibid. ver. 34.

to ourselves; and in all these, and in every thing else, but in ourselves particularly, let us contemplate God, the common Father of all, and our most exalted Creator, and let our contemplation excite our love.

They, who have sent the ignorant and unlearned to pictures and images, as books proper for their instruction, have not acted very wisely, nor has that expedient turned out happily or luckily for the advantage of that part of mankind; but surely this great volume, or system, which is always open, and exposed to the view of all, is admirably adapted to the instruction both of the vulgar and the wise; so that Chrysostom had good reason to call it, "The great book for the learned and unlearned *." And the saying of St. Basil is very much to the purpose. "From the beauty of those things, which are obvious to the eyes of all, we acknowledge that his inexpressible beauty excels that of all the creatures; and from the magnitude of those sensible bodies, that surround us, we conclude the infinite and immense goodness of their Creator, whose plenitude of power exceeds all thought, as well as expression †."

For this very end it evidently appears, all things were made, and we are the only visible beings that are capable of this contemplation: "The world, says St. Basil, is a school, or seminary, very proper for the instruction of rational souls in the knowledge of God ‡." We have also the angels, those ministers of fire, to be spectators with us on this theatre. But will any of us venture to conjecture, what they felt, and what admiration seized them, when they beheld those new kinds of creatures rising into

* Βιβλίον μέγιστον καὶ ἰδιώταις καὶ σόφοις.

† Ἐκ τῆ κάλλες τῶν ὁρωμένων τον ὑπέρκαλον ἐννοώμεθα καὶ ἐκ τῆ μεγέθες τῶν αἰσθητων τετων κ) περιγραπτῶν σωμάτων ἀναλογιζῶμεθα ἄπειρον κ) ὑπερμεγέθη καὶ πᾶσαν διάνοιαν ἐν τω πλήθει τῆς ἑαυτῆ δυλαμεως ὑπερβαίνοντα. Alex. hom. i.

‡ ὁ κόσμος ψυχῶν λογικῶν διδασκαλέιον κ) τῆς θεογνωσίας παιδευτήριον. Alex. hom. i.

being, and those unexpected scenes, that were successively added to the preceding ones, on each of the six days of that first remarkable week: "When he laid the foundations of the earth, and placed the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy *."

But O the stupidity of mankind! All those stupendous objects are daily around us; but because they are constantly exposed to our view, they never affect our minds: so natural is it for us to admire new, rather than grand objects. Therefore the vast multitude of stars, which diversify the beauty of this immense body, does not call the people together; but when any change happens therein, the eyes of all are fixed upon the heavens. "No body looks at the sun, but when he is obscured; nobody observes the moon, but when she is eclipsed, then nature seems to be in danger, then vain superstition is alarmed, and every one is afraid for himself †." "But surely, says St. Bernard, concerning the sun and moon, these are great miracles, very great to be sure: but the first production, or creation of all things, is a vast miracle, and makes it easy to believe all the rest; so that after it, nothing ought to excite our wonder ‡."

* Job xxxviii. 6, 7.

† Sol spectatorem, nisi cum deficit, non habet; nemo observat lunam nisi laborantem, tunc orbes conclamant, tunc pro se quisq; superstitione vana trepidat. SEN.

‡ Magna sunt hæc miracula, magna nimis ita est; miraculum autem immensum est ipsa prima omnium productio, seu creatio, quæ miraculorum omnium adeo facilem fidem facit, ut post eam nihil sit mirum.

LECTURE XII.

Of the Creation of MAN.

THIS great theatre being built, besides those spectators, who had been but lately placed in the higher seats, it pleased the supreme Creator and Lord to have another company below, as it were in the area: these he called forth into being by creation, and man was introduced into this area, "to be a spectator of him and of his works; yet not a spectator only, but also to be the interpreter of them *." Nor yet was man placed therein merely to be a spectator and an interpreter; but also, in a great measure, to be possessor and lord thereof; or, as it were, the Creator's "substitute †," in a spacious and convenient house ready built, and stored with all sorts of useful furniture.

Now, that man himself is a grand and noble piece of workmanship, appears even from this circumstance, that the most wise operator, when he was going to create him, thought fit to preface his design with these words, "Let us make man." So that he was created, not merely by a word of command like the rest of the creatures, "but by a consultation of the blessed Trinity ‡."

And, indeed, man is a wonderful composition, the conjunction of heaven and earth; "The breath of God, and the dust of the ground;" the bond of union between the visible and invisible world, and truly a "world in miniature, a kind of mixt world, nearly related to the other two §." Nor is he only

* ὡς θέατήν τε αὐτῦ κ᾽ τῶν αὐτῦ ἔργων, καὶ ὐ μόνον θεαλήν αγγά καὶ ἐζηγήτην. Arrian.

† ὑποκαλάςατον.

‡ Faciamus hominem. Ut non solo jubentis sermone sicut reliqua, sed consilio sanctæ Trinitatis conditus sit. Arnob.

§ Μικροκόσμ⊙, μικτὸς τίς κόσμ⊙, συγγενὴς τῶν δύο κόσμων. Greg. Nyss.

a lively epitome and representation of the greater world, but also dignified with the image of his great Creator. He made the heavens and the earth, the sea and the stars, and then all sorts of living creatures; but, in the words of the poet, "a more divine creature, and more capable of elevated sentiments, was yet wanting, and one that could rule over the rest, therefore man was born, &c. *"

The rest of the creatures, according to the observation of the schoolmen, which is not amiss, had the impression of the divine foot stamped upon them, but not the image of the Deity. These he created, and reviewing them, found them to be good, yet he did not rest in them; but, upon the creation of man, the Sabbath immediately followed. He made man, and then rested, having a creature capable of knowing that he was his Creator, one that could worship him, and celebrate his sabbath, whose sins, if he should commit any, he might forgive, and send, cloathed with human nature, his only begotten Son, "in whom he is absolutely well pleased," and over whom, as the person that fulfilled his good pleasure, he rejoices for ever, to redeem his favourite creature. By the production of man, the supreme Creator exhibited himself in the most admirable light, and, at the same time, had a creature capable of admiring and loving him; and, as St. Ambrose observes, "one that was under obligation to love his Creator the more ardently, the more wonderfully he perceived himself to be made†." And man, says the same author, was made a two footed animal, that he might be, as it were, one of the inhabitants of the air, that he might "aspire at high things, and fly with the wings of sublime thoughts ‡."

* Sanctius his animal, mentisq; capacius altæ,
Deerat ad huc, & quod dominari in cætera posset,
Natus homo est. Ovid. 1 Met.

† Et quidem tanto ardentius amaret conditorem, quanto mirabilius se ab eo conditum intelligeret.

‡ Et factus est homo bipes, ut sit unus quasi de volatilibus, qui alta visu petat, & quodam remigio volitet sublimum cogitationum.

And, indeed, the structure of man is an instance of wonderful art and ingenuity, whether you consider the symmetry of his whole fabric taken together, or all his parts and members separately. Gregory Nyssen speaks very much to the purpose, when he says, "The frame of man is awful and hard to be explained, and contains in it a lively representation of many of the hidden mysteries of God *." How wonderful is even the structure of his body, which, after all, is but the earthen case of his soul? accordingly it is in the Chaldaic language called *Nidne*, which signifies a sheath. How far does the workmanship exceed the materials? and how justly may we say, "What a glorious creature out of the meanest elements †?" The Psalmist's mind seems to have dwelt upon this meditation, till he was quite lost in it, "how fearfully, says he, and wonderfully am I made!" And that celebrated physician, who studied nature with such unwearied application, in his book upon the structure of the human body, in which, after all, there is nothing divine, often expresses his admiration in these words, "Who is worthy to praise the wisdom and power of the Creator ‡?" and many other such exclamations. The Christian writers, however, are most full upon this subject, particularly St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, and others, who carry their observations so far as the nails, and hair, especially that on the eyelids. And Nyssen, on the words, "Let us make man," has the following observation: "Man is a grand and noble creature—How can man be said to be any great matter? seeing he is a mortal creature, subject to a great many passions: from the time of birth, to that of his old age, exposed to a vast many evils and distresses, and of whom it is written, "Lord, what is man! that thou should be mindful of him!"

* ἡ τῦ ἀνθρώπυ καλασκευὴ φοβερὰ τὶς ϗ δυσερμήνευτος ϗ πολλὰ καὶ ἀπόκρυφα ἐν αὐτῇ μυστήρια θεῦ ἐξεικάνιζυσα.

† Οἱοςίξ ὁίς.

‡ Τὶς ἱκανος ἐσὶ τὴν δημιυργοῦ σοφίαν τέ καὶ δύναμιν ἐπαινεῖν.

&c. The history we have of the production of man, delivered me from this difficulty; for we are told, that God took some of the dust of the earth, and out of it formed man; from these words I understood, that man was at once nothing, and yet something very grand *." He intended to say, that the materials out of which man was made, were low, and as it were, nothing; but, if you consider the wonderful workmanship, how great was the honour conferred upon him! "The earth did not spontaneously produce man as it did grasshoppers; God did not commit the production of this or that particular creature to his ministering powers; no, the gracious Creator took the earth in his own hand †." But besides the noble frame of his body, though it was made of the dust of the earth, that divine breath, and by means of it, the infusion of a precious soul, mixes heaven and earth together; not indeed in the common acceptation of that term, as if things so vastly different were promiscuously jumbled together, and the order of nature subverted; but only implying, that the two parts of the human constitution are compounded with inexpressible art, and joined in a close union. As to the misery of the human race, and the contemptible figure in which the life of man appears, it is to be ascribed to another source, very different from the earthly materials out of which his body was made. That he was created happy, beautiful, and honourable, he owed to his great and good Creator; but he himself is the author of his own misery. And hence it is, that though, with regard to his original and pure nature, we ought, for the strongest reasons, to speak more honourably of him, than of any

* Μέγα ἄνθρωπος καὶ τιμίον. Ἀλλὰ πῶς μεγὰ ὁ ἄνθρωπος; τό ἐπικηρον ζωον τὸ μυρίοις πάθεσιν ὑποκειμενον, το ἐκγεννητῆς ἐις γῆρας μυρίων κακῶν ἐσμὸν ἐξαντλοῦν. Περὶ οὗ εἰ πηται. Κύριε τίς ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὁτὶ μιμνήσκη αὐτοῦ, &c. ἄλλὰ μοι την τοιάυτην διαπόρησαι ἔλυσεν ἱστορόα τῆς γεννήσεως τυ ἀνθρώπυ ἀναγνωσθεισα, &c. Orat. ii.

† ουκ ἡ γῆ αὐτομάτως ὥσπερ τυς τέττιγαο ἐξέβρασε, ἄλλ' ὐκ ἔιπε τῶδε καὶ τῶδε ποιῆσαι λειτυργῖκαις δυνάμεσιν, ἄλλ ἰδιὰ χειρὶ φιλοτεχνεῖ γῆν ἔλαβεν.

other part of the visible world; yet, if we view him, "in his present circumstances*," no part of the creation, to be sure, deserves to be lamented in more mournful strains.

But what words can express, what thought can comprehend, the dignity and powers of that heavenly soul that inhabits this earthly body, and the divine image that is stamped upon it? The philosophers of all ages and nations have been inquiring into the nature of it, and have not yet found it out.

A great many have also amused themselves with too whimsical conjectures and fancies, and endeavoured to discover, by very different methods, a figure of the blessed Trinity in the faculties of the soul. Nor was Methodius satisfied with finding a representation of this mystery in the soul of every particular man, but also imagined he had discovered it in the three first persons of the human race, viz. Adam, Eve, and their first born son, because in them he found *unbegotten*, *begotten*, and *proceeding*, as also *unity* of nature, and the *origination* of all mankind. But not to insist upon these, it is certain, the rational, or intellectual, and immortal soul, so long as it retained its original purity, was adorned with the lively and refulgent image of the Father of Spirits, its eternal Creator; but afterwards, when it became polluted and stained with sin, this image, though not immediately quite ruined, was, however, miserably obscured and defaced. It is true, the beautiful and erect frame of the human body, which gives it an advantage over all other creatures, and some other external graces, that man possesses, may possibly be some reflected rays of the divine excellence; but I should hardly call them the image of God: as St. Ambrose well observes, "How can flesh, which is but earth, be said to be made after the image of God, in whom there is no earth at all? and shall we be said

* οἷος νῦν βρότος ἐστίν.

to be like God, because we are of a higher rank than sheep and does*."

The dominion over the rest of the creatures, which man enjoys, is a kind of faint shadow of the absolute and unlimited sway of the supreme Majesty of heaven and earth. I dare not, however, venture to say, it is that image, of which we are speaking; but, as those who draw the picture of a king, after laying down the lineaments of the face and body, use to add the purple robe, and other ensigns of royalty, this dominion may certainly supply the place of these, with regard to this image of God on man. But the lively colours in which the image itself are drawn, are "Purity, says Nyssen, absence of evil, understanding, and speech†." For even the eternal Son, and the wisdom of the Father, seems to be intended by the philosophers under the term of the *creating mind*‡; and by the divine apostle John, he is called the *Word:* to these we have very good ground to add charity, as nothing can be named that renders man liker to God§; for "God is love, and the fountain of it‖." It is true, charity is a valuable disposition of the mind, but it also discovers itself in the frame of the human body; for man was made quite defenceless, having neither horns, claws, nor sting, but naked and harmless, and, as it were, entirely formed for meekness, peace, and charity.

The same author, speaking of the image of God on man, expresses himself as follows: "Wherefore that you may be like God, exercise liberality and beneficence, study to be innocent, avoid every crime, subdue all the motions of sin—conquer all the beasts that are within you. What, you will say, have I beasts within me? Yes, you have beasts, and a vast

* Caro terra est, qui dicatur ad imaginem Dei fata cum in Deo terra non sit? & an eo Dei similes dicemur, quia damulis atque ovibus celsiores sumus?

† Καθαρότης, κακῶν ἀλλοίωσις, ψυχῆς λόγος.

‡ Δημιουργὸς.

§ Θειοειδέστερόν,

‖ ἀγάπη ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ ἀγάπης πηγή.

number of them. And that you may not think I intend to insult you, is anger an inconsiderable beast, when it barks in your heart? What is deceit, when it lies hid in a cunning mind, is it not a fox? Is not the man, who is furiously bent upon calumny, a scorpion? Is not the person, who is eagerly set on resentment and revenge, a most venomous viper? What do you say of a covetous man, is he not a ravenous wolf? And is not the luxurious man, as the prophet expresses it, a neighing horse? Nay, there is no wild beast but is found within us; and do you consider yourself as Lord and Prince of the wild beasts, because you command those that are without, though you never think of subduing, or setting bounds to those that are within you? What advantage have you by your reason, which enables you to overcome lions, if, after all, you yourself are overcome by anger? To what purpose do you rule over the birds, and catch them with gins, if you yourself, with the inconstancy of a bird, are hurried hither and thither, and sometimes flying high, are ensnared by pride, sometimes brought down and caught by pleasure? But as it is shameful for him, who rules over nations, to be a slave at home, and for the man who sits at the helm of the state, to be meanly subjected to the beck of a contemptible harlot, or even of an imperious wife; will it not be, in like manner, disgraceful for you, who exercise dominion over the beasts that are without you, to be subject to a great many, and those of the worst sort, that roar and domineer in your distempered mind *?"

I shall, last of all, here subjoin, what some of the ancients have observed, viz. that the nature of the human soul, as it lies hid out of sight, and to us

* Θεῷ ὐν ὅμοιος ἔστη δια τῆς χρηστότητος, δια τὴς ἀνεξικακίας. δια κοι, νωνίας, μισοπονηρός ὢν καὶ κατάκρατῶν τῶν πάθων τῶν ἐνδον, ἄρχε θηρίων. τὶ ὄυν ἐρεῖς, ἐγω θήρια ἔχω ἐν ἱμαυτῳ; καὶ μυρία πολὺν ὄχλον ἐν σοὶ θηρίων ἔχεις, καὶ μὴ ὑβοῦν νομισας ἐιναί τό λεγόμενον. Πόσον θηρίον εςίν ὁ θύμος ὅταν ὑλακτῆ τῆ καρδία, &c.

quite unknown, bears an evident resemblance to that of God, who is himself unsearchable and past finding out *.

But when we have well considered all these things, and the many other thoughts of this kind that may occur; may we not cry out, How surprising and shocking is the madness and folly of mankind; the far greater part whereof, as if they had quite forgot their original and native dignity, disparage themselves so far, as to pursue the meanest objects, and shamefully plunge themselves in mud.

The words of Epictetus are divine, and have a wonderful savour of piety: "You go to the city of *Olympia*, says he, to see some of the works of Phidias; but you have no ambition to convene, in order to understand, and look at those works, which may be seen without travelling at all. Will you never understand what you are, nor why you were brought into the world; nor, finally, what that is which you have now an opportunity to view and contemplate †?" And in another place, "For if we were wise, what have we else to do, both in public and in private, but to praise and celebrate the Deity, and to return our thanks to him? ought we not, while we are digging, plowing, and eating, to sing to God this hymn? Great is the Lord, who has provided us with these necessaries of life, &c. ‡."

As for you, young gentlemen, I would have you to be sensible of the honour and dignity of your original state, and to be deeply impressed with the indignity and disgrace of your nature;

* Καὶ εἰκόνα τυπικὴν τοῦ ἀνωνύμου, καὶ ἀγνώριστον Θεοῦ.

† Εἰς Ὀλυμπίαν μὲν ἀποδημεῖτε, ἵν' ἰδῇτε τὸ ἔργον τοῦ Φειδίου—ὅταν δὲ οὐδ' ἀποδημῆσαι χρεία ἐστὶν ταυτα δὲ θεάσασθαι καὶ καλανοῆσαι οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσετε οὐκ αἰσθήσεσθε τοίνυν ὅτε τίνες ἐστέ, ὅτέ ἐσμεν τί γεγόναμεν, ὅτ' ἐσμὲν τί τοῦτο ἐστὶν ἐφ' ὃ τον θέαν παρειλήφαμεν? Arr. lib. i. cap. 6.

‡ Εἰ γαρ νῦν εἴχομεν, ἀλλὸ τὶ ἔδει ὑμᾶς ποιεῖν καὶ κοινῇ καὶ ἰδία ἢ ὑμνεῖν τὸ θεῖον καὶ εὐφημεῖν καὶ ἐπεξέρχεσθαι τὰς χάριτας; οὐκ ἔδει καὶ σκάπτοντας καὶ ἀρῶντας καὶ ἐσθίοντας ἄδειν, μέγας ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἡμῖν παρέχει ὄργανα ταῦτα. Ibid. cap. 16.

now fallen and vitiated, and dwell particularly upon the contemplation of it. Suffer not the great honour and dignity of the human race which is to know the eternal and invisible God, to acknowledge him, love him, and worship him, to decay and die away within you: this, alas! is the way of the far greater part of the world; but do you live in continual remembrance of your original, and assert your claim to heaven, as being originally from it, and soon to return to it again.

LECTURE XIII.

Of Providence.

THE doctrines, we have been handling, are the great supports of faith, piety, and the whole of religion; wherefore it is most just, that the zeal and care of the scholars should concur with that of their teachers, to have them well secured in the mind and affections: "For a weak foundation," as the lawyers observe, "is the ruin of the work*." There are two principal pillars, and, as it were, the Jachin and Boaz of the living temples of God, which the apostle to the Hebrews lays down in these words: "He, that cometh to God," (under which expression is comprehended every devout affection, and every act of religious worship) must believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

"That *God* is," not only implies, that he is eternal and self-existent; but also, that he is, to all other beings, the spring and fountain of what they are, and what they have, and, consequently, that he is the wise aud powerful Creator of angels and men, and even of the whole universe; this is the first particular, that *God* is. The second, "that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," ascertains the *providence and government of God*, exemplified in its most eminent effect, with regard to mankind. For providence extends further than this, and comprehends in it a constant preservation and support of all things visible and invisible, whether in heaven or earth, and the sovereign government and disposal of them. Mechanics, when they have completed houses, ships, and other works they have been enga-

* Debile enim fundamentum fallit opus.

ged in, leave them to take their fate in the world, and, for the most part, give themselves no further trouble about the accidents that may befal them. But the supreme architect, and wise Creator, never forsakes the work of his hands, but keeps his arms continually about it, to preserve it; sits at the helm to rule and govern it; is himself in every part of it, and fills the whole with his presence. So great a fabric could not possibly stand, without some guardian and ruler; nor can this be any other than the Creator himself: for who can pay a greater regard to it, support it more effectually, or govern it with greater wisdom, than he who made it? "Nothing can be more perfect than God, therefore it is necessary the world should be governed by him*," says Cicero. And, "they who take away providence, though they acknowledged God in words, in fact deny him†."

If we believe that all things were produced out of nothing; the consequence is, that by the same powerful hand that created them, they must be preserved and supported, to keep them from falling back into their primitive nothing. It must be also owned, that, by the same powerful hand, the regular motions of the stars, the contexture of the elementary world, the various kinds of creatures, and the uninterrupted succession of their generations, are continued and preserved. Nor is divine providence to be confined within the heavens, or in the lower world restrained to the care of generals, in opposition to individuals; although the peripatetic school inclined too much to this opinion, and, even the master of that school, *Aristotle* himself, in his often quoted book, if it really be his, *de Mundo*. For, that providence extends to all things in this lower globe, from the highest to the lowest, and comprehends within its sphere particular, as well as general things, the least as well as the

* Nihil Deo præstantius, ab eo igitur regi necesse est. CIC.

† Qui providentiam negant, verbis licet Deum ponunt, reipsa tollunt.

greatest, is confirmed not only by the doctrine of the sacred scripture, but also by the testimony of all sound philosophy.

Therefore, in maintaining the doctrine of Providence, 1st, we affirm, that the eternal mind has an absolute and perfect knowledge of all things in general, and every single one in particular; nor does he see only those that are actually present, as they appear in their order upon the stage of the world; but at one view comprehends all that are past, as well as to come, as if they were all actually present before him *. This the antient philosopher Thales is said to have asserted expressly, even with regard to the hidden motions, and most secret thoughts of the human mind; for being asked, "If any one, that does evil, can conceal it from God? He answered, no, not even his evil thoughts †." "Nothing is left unprovided for, says St. Basil, nothing is overlooked by God; his watchful eye sees all things, he is present every where, to give salvation to all ‡." Epictetus has also some very divine thoughts upon this subject ||.

And here, was any one to reflect seriously on the vast number of affairs, that are constantly in agitation in one province, or even in one city, the many political schemes and projects, the multiplicity of law matters, the still greater number of family-affairs, and all the particulars comprehended under so many general heads, he would be amazed and overpowered, with the thoughts of a knowledge so incomprehensibly extensive. This was the very thought which excited the divine Psalmist's admiration, and made him cry out with wonder and astonishment, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it[a]."

* Ταῖ' ἔοντα ταῖ' ἐσσόμενα προῖ' ἔοντα.

† ἐι Θεὸν τὶς λάθοι κακὸν τί πράσσων; ἀλλ ὐδὲ διανούμενος.

‡ Ὀυδὲν ἀπρονόητον, ὐδὲν ἠμελημενον παρὰ Θεῷ ταυτα σκοπέυει ὁ ἀκοίμητος ὄφθαλμος πᾶσι πάρει, σκορπιζων ἑκαστω την σωταριαν.

|| Arr. lib. i. cap. 12. [a] Psm. cxxxix. 6.

2dly, He not only knows all things, and takes notice of them, but he also rules and governs them: "He hath done whatever he pleased in the heavens and the earth, says the Psalmist:" and, "He worketh all things," says the Apostle, "according to the counsel of his own will:" he does all things according to his pleasure; but that pleasure is influenced by his reason, all things absolutely; but yet all things with the greatest justice, sanctity, and prudence.

He views and governs the actions of man in a particular manner; he hath given him a law; he hath proposed rewards, annexed punishments to enforce it, and engage man's obedience. And having discovered, as it were, an extraordinary concern about him, when he made him, as we have oberved upon the words, "Let us make man;" in like manner, he still continues to maintain an uncommon good-will towards him; and, so to speak, an anxious concern about him: so that one of the antients most justly called man, "God's favourite creature." And he spoke much to the purpose, who said, "God is neither a lover of horses, nor of birds, but of mankind*." With regard to the justice of the supreme government of providence, we meet with a great deal, even in the antient poets.

"O father Jove," says Æschylus, "thou reignest in heaven, thou takest notice of the rash and wicked actions of gods and men. Thy care even extends to the wild beasts, thou observest the wrongs done them, and securest their privileges†."

"Though justice," says *Euripides*, "comes late, it is still justice; it lies hid, as it were, in ambush,

* ὁ Θεὸς οὐ φίλιππος, οὐδὲ φιλορνις, ἀλλὰ φιλάνθρωπος.

† Ω Ζεῦ πάτερ, Ζεῦ, σόν μεν οὐρανοῦ κράτος,
Συ δ' ἐργ' επουρανίων καὶ ἀνθρώπων ὁρᾶς
Λεωργά κἀθεμιστα. Σοι καὶ θηρίων
Ὕβρις τέ καὶ δίκη μελει.

till it finds an opportuuity to inflict due punishment upon the wicked man*."

"Dost thou think," says Æschylus, "to get the better of the divine knowledge, and that justice stands at a distance from the human race? She is near at hand, and sees without being seen; she knows who ought to be punished; but when she will suddenly fall upon the wicked, that thou knowest not†."

"The weight of justice," says the same author, in another place, "falls upon some quickly in the day-time, it lies in wait for some sins till the twilight; the longer it is delayed, the severer the punishment; accordingly, some are consigned to eternal night‡."

There are two difficulties, however, on this head which are not easily solved. 1st, The success that commonly attends the wicked in this world, and the evil to which the good are exposed. On this subject, even the philosophers, pleading the cause of God, which, if we take their word, they thought a matter of no great difficulty, advanced a great many things. Seneca tells us, "There is a settled friendship, nay a near relation and similitude between God and good men; he is even their father; but, in their education, he inures them to hardships: when therefore you see them struggling with difficulties, sweating, and employed in up-hill work; while the wick-

* Λίκα τοτ δὶκα χρόνιος.
Αλλ' ὅμως ὑποπεσοῦσ'
Ἐλάθεν ὅταν ἔχῃ
Τιν' ἀσεβῆ βροτῶν.

† Δοκεῖς τὰ θεῶν σὺ ξυνητὰ νικῆσάι ποτε
Καὶ τὴν δίκην πῶ μακρ' ἀποικεῖσθαι βροτῶν;
'Η δ' ἐγγυς ἐςιν οὐχ ὁρωμένη δ' ὁρᾶ
'Ον χρὴ κογάζειν τ' οἶδεν. Αλλ' ουκ οἶθα συ
'Οπόταν ἄφνω μολοῦσα διολέση κακοῦς.

‡ Ροπὴ δ' ἐπισκοπεῖ δίκας
Ταχεῖα τοὺς μὲν ἐν φάει,
Τὰ δ' ἐν μεταιχμίῳ σκότου
Μένει, χρονίζοντ' ἄχη βρύει
Τοὺς δ' ἄκραντος ἔχει νὺξ.

ed, on the other hand, are in high spirits, and swim in pleasures; consider, that we are pleased with modesty in our children, and forwardness in our slaves; the former we keep under by severe discipline, while we encourage impudence in the latter. Be persuaded, that God takes the same method; he does not pamper the good man with delicious fare, but tries him; he accustoms him to hardships, and, (which is a wonderful expression in a heathen) PREPARES HIM FOR HIMSELF*." And in another place, "Those luxurious persons, whom he seems to indulge and to spare, he reserves for evils to come. For you are mistaken, if you think any one excepted; the man, who has been long spared, will at last have his portion of misery; and he, that seems to have been dismissed, is only delayed for a time†," and a vast deal more to this purpose. The same sort of sentiments we meet with in Plutarch: "God takes the same method," says he, "with good men, that teachers do with their scholars, when they exact more than ordinary of those children, of whom they have the greatest hopes‡." And it is a noble thought, which we meet with in the same author, "If he, who transgresses in the morning," says he, "is punished in the evening, you will not say that, in this case, justice is slow; but to God one, or even several

* Inter bonos viros ac DEUM est amicitia, imo necessitudo, & similitudo, imo ille eorum pater, sed durius eos educat, cum itaq; eos videris laborare, sudare, & ardum ascendere, malos autem lascivire, & voluptatibus fluere, cogita, filiorum nos modestia delectare, vernularum licentia: illos disciplina tristiori contineri, horum ali audaciam. Idem tibi de DEO liqueat, bonum virum deliciis non innutrit, experitur, indurat, & SIBI ILLUM PREPARAT.

† Eos autem quibus indulgere videtur, quibus parcere, molles venturis malis servat. Erratis enim si quem judicatis exceptum, veniet ad illum diu felicem sua portio. Et qui videtur dimissus esse, delatus est. SEN. de Gubern. Mundi.

‡ Hanc rationem DEUS sequitur in bonis viris, quam in discipulis suis preceptores, qui plus laboris ab iis exigunt, in quibus certior spes est. PLUT. περὶ τῶν βραδέως τιμωρουμένων.

ages, are but as one day*." How near is this to St. Peter's saying on the same subject†?

2dly, The other point upon this subject, which perplexes men fond of controversy, and is perplexed by them, is how to reconcile human liberty with divine providence, which we have taken notice of before. But to both these difficulties, and to all others, that may occur upon the subject, I would oppose the saying of St. Augustine, "Let us grant that he can do some things which we cannot understand §."

What a melancholy thing would it be to live in a world where anarchy reigned? It would certainly be a woeful situation to all; but more, especially, to the best, and most inoffensive part of mankind. It would have been no great privilege to have been born into a world without God, and without providence; for if there was no supreme ruler of the world, then undoubtedly the wickedness of men would reign without any curb or impediment, and the great and powerful would unavoidably devour the weak and helpless, "as the great fishes often eat up the small, and the hawk makes havock among the weaker birds ‖."

It may be objected, that this frequently happens, even in the present world, as appears from the prophecies of Habbakuk[b]: but the prophet, immediately after, asserts, that there is a supreme power, which holds the reins in the midst of these irregularities; and, though they are sometimes permitted, yet there is a determinate time appointed for setting all things to rights again, which the just man expects, and, till it comes, lives by faith[c]. Some passages of Ariston's Iambicks are admirable to this purpose.

* Si qui mane peccavit, vespere puniatur, tardum hoc non dies, at Deo seculum, vel etiam plura secula pro die uno.

† 2 Pet. iii. 8.

§ Demus illum aliquod facere, & nos non posse intelligere.

‖ ——— Pisces ut sæpe minutos
Magna comest, & aves enecat accipiter.

[b] Hab. cap. i. [c] Ibid. cap. ii.

"*A.* Be patient; for God uses to support worthy men, such as you are, in a remarkable manner: and unless those, who act in a becoming manner, are to receive some great reward, to what purpose is it, pray, to cultivate piety any longer? *B.* I wish that may be the case; but I too often see those, who conform themselves to the rules of piety and virtue, oppressed by calamity; while those who mind nothing but what they are prompted to by private interest and profit, thrive and flourish much better than we. *A.* For the present it is so, indeed; but it becomes us to look a great way forward, and wait till the world has compleated its full revolution; for it is by no means true, that this life is entirely under the dominion of blind chance, or fortune, though many entertain this wicked notion; and the corrupt part of mankind, from this consideration, encourage themselves in immorality: but the virtues of the good will meet with a proper reward, and the wicked will be punished for their crimes; for nothing happens without the will of heaven*."

What the poets sometimes advance concerning a supreme fate, which governs all things, they often ascribe to God; though now and then they forget themselves, and subject even the supreme Being to their fate, as the Stoic philosophers did also: but possibly they both had a sound meaning, though it was couched under words that sound a little harsh; and this meaning now and then breaks forth, particularly when they celebrate God, for disposing all things, by an eternal law, according to his own good pleasure, and thereby make him the supreme and universal governor, subject to no other, but, in some respect, to himself, or to his decrees; which, if you understand them in a sound sense, is all that they can mean by their σοφώτατον, and their το ἀμεταβλητον. The same judgment is to be passed with regard to what

* A. Ἀάρσει. Βοηθεῖν πάσιν τοῖσιν ἀξιοῖς
Εἰκθεν ὁ Θεος, &c.

we find said about fortune; for either that word signifies nothing at all, or you must understand by it the supreme mind, freely disposing of all things; and this is very clearly attested by the following excellent verses of Menander.

"Cease to improve your minds, for the mind of man is nothing at all. The government of all things is solely in the hands of fortune; whether this fortune be a mind, or the Spirit of God, or whatever else it is, it carries all before it; human prudence is but a vapour, a mere trifle, &c.*"

We have also a great many proofs, that, in the opinion of the old poets, fate and fortune were precisely the same; one instance whereof we meet with in the following passage, "Fortune and fate, Pericles, are the givers of all that man enjoys †."

And, instead of the terms fate and fortune, they sometimes used the word necessity. But all these were but other names, though ill-chosen, for providence. Euripides, having said a great deal concerning fate or necessity, at last resolves the whole into this: "Jupiter executes, with thee, all he had decreed before ‡."

And Homer's words are very remarkable: "Jupiter," says he, "increases or diminishes the valour of men, as he thinks proper: for he is the most powerful of all §."

* Παύσασθε, νῦν ἔχοντες, οὐδὲν γάρ πλέον
Ανθρώτοις νοῦς ἐστιν· ἀλλ' ὁ τῆς τύχης,
Εἴτ' ἐστὶ τοῦτο πνεῦμα θεῖον εἴτε νοῦς,
Τοῦτ' ἐστί παντὰ καὶ κυβερνῶν, καὶ στρέφον
Καὶ σῶζον, ἡ πρόνοια δ' ἡ ἀνητή, κατωνός,
Καὶ φλήναφος, &c.

† Πάντα τύχη καὶ μοῖρα, Περίκλεες ἄνδρι διδωσιν.

‡ Καὶ γάρ Ζεύς, νέυση
Συν σοι τοῦτο τελευτᾶ. Eurip. in Alcestide.

§ Ζευς δ' ἀρετὴν ἄνδρεσσιν ὀφέλλει τε μινύθει τε
Ὅτωτος κεν ἐθέλησιν· ὁ γὰρ κάρτιστος ἀπάντων. Hom. Il. xx.

And in another place, "Jove, from Olympus, distributes happiness to good and bad men in general, and every one in particular, as he himself thinks proper *."

Let us, therefore, look upon God as our father, and venture to trust him with our all; let us ask and beg of him what we want, and look for supplies from no other quarter. This the indulgent father in Terence desired, and much more our heavenly father. And surely every thing is better conducted by a dutiful love and confidence, than by an ignoble and servile fear; and we are very injurious both to him and ourselves, when we think not, that all things, on his part, are managed with the greatest goodness and bounty. It is a true test of religion and obedience, when, with honourable thoughts, and a firm confidence in our father, we absolutely depend upon him, and serve him from a principle of love. "Be not," says Augustine, "a froward boy, in the house of the best of fathers; loving him when he is fond of thee, and hating him when he gives thee chastisement; as if, in both cases, he did not intend to provide an inheritance for thee †." If we suppose this providence to be the wisest and the best, it is necessary that, in every instance, our wills should be perfectly submissive to its designs; otherwise we prefer our own pleasure to the will of heaven, which appears very unnatural. St. Augustine, on the expression, *upright in heart*, which we frequently meet with in the Psalms, makes an excellent observation: "If you chearfully embrace," says he, "the divine will in some things, but in others would rather prefer your own; you are crooked in heart, and would

* Ζευς δ' αὐτὸς νέμει ὄλβον Ὀλύμπιος ἀνθρώποισιν
Ἐσθλοῖς ἠδὲ κακοῖσιν, ὅπως ἑθέλησιν ἑκάστῳ. Hom. Odyss. iv.

† Ne sis puer insulsus in domo optimi patris, amans patrem, si tibi blanditur, & odio habens, quando te flagellat, quasi non et blandiens, & flagellans hæreditatem paret.

not have your crooked inclinations conformed to his upright intentions, but, on the contrary, would bend his upright will to yours* ".

* Si voluntatem divinam in quibusdam amplecteris in aliis tuam malles, curvus es corde, & non vis curvam tuam voluntatem ad illius rectam dirigere, sed illius rectam vis ad tuam curvam incurvare.

LECTURE XIV.

Of CHRIST *the* SAVIOUR.

IT is acknowledged, that the publication of the gospel is exceeding agreeable, and perfectly answers its original name, which signifies good tidings. How much sweeter is this joyful news, than the most ravishing and delightful concerts of music? Nay, these are the best tidings that were ever heard in any age of the world! O happy shepherds, to whom this news were sent down from heaven! Ye, to be sure, though watching in the fields, exposed to the severe cold of the night, were in this more happy than kings, that slept at their ease in gilded beds, that the wonderful nativity of the supreme King, begotten from eternity, that nativity which brought salvation to the whole world, was first communicated to you, and just at the time it happened. "Behold, says the angel, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day a Saviour[c]." And immediately a great company of the heavenly host joined the angel, and in your hearing sung, "Glory to God in the highest[d]." And indeed, in the strictest truth, "A most extraordinary child was sent down from the lofty heavens, &c.*"

Whence also his name was sent down along with him, "His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." "O sweet name of Jesus," says St. Bernard, "honey in the mouth, melo-

[c] Luke ii. 10, 11. [d] Luke ii. 14.

* Jam nova progenies cælo demittitur alto, &c. VIRG. Ecl.

dy in the ears, and healing to the heart." This is the Saviour, who, though we were so miserable, and so justly miserable, yet would not suffer us to perish. Nor did he only put on our nature, but also our sins; that is, in a legal sense, our guilt being transferred to him; whence we not only read, "that the word was made flesh[d];" but also, "that he was made sin for us, who knew no sin[e];" and even, as we have it in the epistle to the Galatians, that he was made *a curse*[f], that from him an eternal blessing and felicity might be derived to us. The spotless Lamb of God bore our sins, that were devolved upon him; by thus bearing them, he destroyed them; and by dying for them, gained a compleat victory over death. And how wonderful is the gradation of the blessings he procured for us; he not only delivered us from a prison and death, but presents us with a kingdom; according to that of the Psalmist, "Who redeemeth thee from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies[g]."

I believe there are none so stupid or insensible, as to refuse that these tidings are very agreeable and pleasing to the ear. But we may, not without some reason, suspect of the greatest part of nominal christians, who commonly receive these truths with great applause, that it may be said to them, without any injustice, "What is all this to you?" These privileges are truly great and manifold, and indifferently directed to all, to whom they are preached, unless they reject them, and shut the door against happiness offering to come in: and this is not only the case of a great part of mankind, but they also impose upon themselves by false hopes, as if it were enough to hear of these great blessings, and dream themselves happy, because these sounds had reached their ears. But O unhappy men! what will all these immense riches signify to you, I must indeed say, if you are

[d] John i. 14. [e] Psm. ciii. [f] 2 Cor. v. 12. [g] Gal. iii.

not allowed to use them, but rather, if you know not how to avail yourselves of them?

I therefore earnestly wish that these words of the gospel were well fixed in your minds: "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

In him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid, and without him there is nothing but emptiness; "because in him all fulness doth dwell." But what advantage can it be to us to hear these riches of our Jesus spoken of at great length, and to excellent purpose, or even to speak of them ourselves, if, all the while, we talk of them as a good foreign to us, and in which we have no concern, because our hearts are not yet open to receive him. What, pray, would the most accurate description of the Fortunate islands, as they are called, or all the wealth of the Indies, and the New World, with its golden mines, signify to a poor man half naked, struggling with all the rigours of cold and hunger? should one, in these circumstances, I say, hear or read of these immense treasures; or should any one describe them to him in the most striking manner, either by word of mouth, or with the advantage of an accurate pen; can it be doubted, but this empty display of riches, this phantom of wealth and affluence, would make his sense of want and misery the more intolerable; unless it be supposed, that despair had already reduced him to a state of insensibility? What further enhances the misery of those, who hear of this treasure, and think of it to no purpose, is this, that there is none of them, who is not miserable by choice, "and a beggar in the midst of the greatest wealth," and not only miserable by choice, but obstinately

[h] John i. 10, 11, 12.

so, from an invincible and distracted fondness for the immediate causes of his misery: "For who but a downright madman would reject such golden offers *?"

To give a brief and plain state of the case: to those, that sincerely and with all their hearts receive him, *Christ is all things*; to those that receive him not, *nothing*. For, how can any good, however suitable or extensive, be actually enjoyed; or, indeed, any such enjoyment conceived, without some kind of union between that good, and the person supposed to stand in need of it? "Behold, says the Psalmist, all those, that are far from thee, shall perish." To *be united to God*, is the great, and the only good of mankind; and the only means of this union is Jesus, in whatever sense you take it: he ought truly to be called the *union of unions;* who, that he might with the greater consistency, and the more closely unite our souls to God, did not disdain to unite himself to a human body.

The great business of our life, therefore, young Gentlemen, is this acceptance of Christ, and this inseparable union with him which we are now reccommending. Thrice happy, and more than thrice happy are they, who are joined with him in this undivided union, which no complaints, nor even the day of death can dissolve; nay, the last day is happy above all other days, for this very reason, that it fully and finally compleats this union, and is so far from dissolving it, that it renders it absolutely perfect and everlasting.

But that it may be coeval with eternity, and last for ever, it is absolutely necessary that this union should have its beginning in this short and fleeting life. And pray, what hinders those of us, that have not entered into this union before, to enter into it without delay? Seeing the bountiful Jesus not only rejects none that come unto him, but also offers him-

* Quis enim nisi mentis inops oblatum hoc respuat aurum?

self to all that do not wilfully reject him, and standing at the door, earnestly begs to be admitted. O! "why do not these everlasting doors open, that the king of glory may enter,[h]" and reign within us? Nay, though he were to be sought in a far country, and with great labour, why should we delay, and what unhappy chains detain us? why do we not, after shaking them all off, and even ourselves, go as it were out of ourselves, and seek him incessantly till we find him? then rejoicing over him, say with the heavenly spouse, "I held him, and would not let him go;" and further add, with the same spouse, that blessed expression, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." And, indeed, this interest is always reciprocal. No man truly receives Jesus, that does not, at the same time, deliver up himself wholly to him. Among all the advantages we pursue, there is nothing comparable to this exchange. Our gain is immense from both, not only from the acceptance of him, but also from surrendering ourselves to him: so long as this is delayed, we are the most abject slaves: when one has delivered himself up to Christ, then and then only he is truly free, and becomes master of himself. Why should we wander about to no purpose? To him let us turn our eyes, on him fix our thoughts, that he, who is ours by the donation of the Father, and his own free gift, may be ours by a chearful and joyous acceptance. As St Bernard says on these words of the prophet, "To us a child is born, to us a son is given. Let us therefore make use of what is ours, saith he, for our own advantage*." So then, let him be ours by *possession* and *use*†, and let us be his for ever, never forgetting how dearly he has bought us.

[h] Psm. xxiv.

* Puer natus est nobis, filius nobis datus est. Utamur, inquit, nostro in utilitatem nostram.

† κτησει και χρησει

LECTURE XV.

Of REGENERATION.

THE Platonists divide the world into two, the sensible and intellectual world; they imagine the one to be the type of the other, and that sensible and spiritual things are stamped, as it were, with the same stamp or seal. These sentiments are not unlike the notions, which the masters of the caballistical doctrine among the Jews, concerning God's *sephiroth* and seal, wherewith, according to them, all the worlds, and every thing in them, are stamped or sealed; and these are probably near akin to what Lord Bacon of Verulem calls his *parallela signacula*, and *symbolizantes schematismi*. According to this hypothesis, these parables and metaphors, which are often taken from natural things to illustrate such as are divine, will not be similitudes taken entirely at pleasure; but are often, in a great measure, founded in nature, and the things themselves. Be this as it may, that great change, which happens in the souls of men by a real and effectual conversion to God, is illustrated in the holy scriptures by several remarkable changes both natural and civil, particularly *by a deliverance from chains prison and slavery;* by *a transition from one kingdom to another*, and *from darkness to light*[k]; by *a restoration from death to life;* by *a new creation*; by a *marriage*; and by *adoption and regeneration.* Concerning this great change, as it is represented under the last of these figures, we propose, with divine assistance, to offer a few thoughts from these words of St. John's gospel, which we have already mentioned; "to as many as received him, to them gave he power, or the privilege, to become the sons of God[k]." Together

[k] John i. 12.

with these words of our Saviour in another place of the same gospel, "except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God[l]."

If, indeed, we consider the nature and the original of man, it is not, without reason, that he is called the Son of *God*, according to that passage, which the apostle, in his short, but most weighty sermon to the Athenians, quotes from the poet Aratus, and at the same time approves of, "for we are all his offspring *." Our first parent, in St. Luke's gospel, is also expressly called *the Son of God*[m], not only because he was created immediately by *God*, without any earthly father, but also on account of the divine image, that was originally impressed upon the human nature.

And this glorious title, which distinguishes him from all other corporeal beings, he has in common with the angels, who are also so called in several places of the book of Job[n]. It is indeed true, to use the words of St. Basil, "That every piece of workmanship bears some mark or character of the workman who made it †:" for I should rather chuse, in this case, to use the word *mark* or *character* than *likeness:* but of man alone it is said, "Let us make him after our own image." And this distinction is not improperly expressed by the schoolmen, who say, as we have already observed, that all the other works of *God* are stamped with the print of his foot; but only man, of all the visible creation, honoured with the image or likeness of his face. And indeed, on account of this image or resemblance it is, that he is in dignity very nearly equal to the angels, though made inferior to them. Here it is to be observed, that this inferiority is but little, "Who was made, saith the apostle, a little lower than the angels[o]:" so that, with regard to

[l] John iii. 3. * Τȣ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμὲν. [m] Luke iii. ult.

[n] Job i. 6. and xxxviii. 7. [o] Heb. ii. 9.

† πᾶν τὸ ἐργαζόμενον ἔχειν τινὰ τȣ τέχνȣ τύπον.

his body, he is nearly related to the brute creatures, and only a little superior to them, with regard to temperament, and the beautiful elegance of his frame, but made out of the very same materials, the same moist and soft clay, taken from the bosom of their great and common mother; whereas, to use the words of the poet, "The soul is the breath of *God*, which takes its rise from heaven, and is closely united to his earthly body, like a light shut up in a dark cavern *."

That divine part of the human composition derives its original from the Father of Spirits, in the same manner with those ministers of fire, who are not confined to corporeal vehicles; concerning whom the oracle, having acknowledged one supreme and divine majesty, immediately subjoins; "and we angels are but a small part of *God* †."

And with regard to this principle, which excels in man, which actually constitutes the man, and on account of which he most truly deserves that name, he is a noble and divine animal; and whatever some fanciful and proud men may boast, concerning their families, "if we consider our original, and that God was the author of the human kind, none of Adam's race can be called ignoble ‡."

But if, on the other hand, we regard our woeful fall, which was the consequence of sin, we are all degenerate; we have all fallen from the highest honour into the greatest disgrace, and the deepest gulph of all sorts of misery; we have given away our liberty and greatest dignity, in exchange for the most shameful and most deplorable bondage; instead of the sons of *God*, we are become the slaves of Satan; and if we now want to know to what family we belong, the apostle will tell us, "That

* Ψυχὴ δ' ἐστὶν ἄημα Θεοῦ κ) μίξιν ἀνεῖλη
Οὐρανὸν χθονίοιο, φάους σπηλυγγι κάλυφθεν. Naz. de anima.

† Μικρὰ δὲι Θεοῦ μερὶς ἄγγελοι ἡμεῖς.

‡ Si primordia nostra,
Authoremq; Deum spectes,
Nullus degener extat. Boeth. de Cons. Phil. lib. iii. met. 6.

we are children of wrath, and sons of disobedience *."

But as the overflowing fountain of goodness and bounty did not chuse that so noble a monument of his wisdom should be entirely ruined by this dismal fall; could any one be more proper to raise it up again, or better qualified to restore men to the dignity of the sons of God, than his own eternal Son, who is the most perfect and express image of the Father. Nor does this glorious person decline the severe service: though he was the son of his Father's love, the heir and lord of the whole universe; though he might be called the delight of his most exalted Father, and of all blessed spirits, and now, with the greatest justice, the darling of the human kind; yet he left his Father's bosom, and, O wonderful condescension! became the son of man, that men might, anew, become the sons of God: whence he is also called the second Adam, because he recovered all that was lost by the first.

That all, who sincerely receive him, might be again admitted into the embraces of the Father, and no more be called children of wrath, he himself submitted to the punishment due to our disobedience; and, by bearing it, removed our guilt, and pacified justice. He also went into the flames of divine wrath to deliver us from them; and by a plentiful stream of his most precious blood, quite extinguished them. He likewise took effectual care that those, who were now no longer to be called *children of wrath*, should also cease to be *children of disobedience*, by pouring out upon them a plentiful effusion of his sanctifying spirit; that their hearts being thereby purged from all impure affections, and the love of earthly things, they might, under the influence of the same good spirit, chearfully lead a life of sincere and universal obedience. Now, it cannot be doubted, that those who are so actuated and conducted by the divine Spirit, are truly the *sons of*

* Υιοι απειθειας και τεκνα οργης. Eph. ii. 2, 3.

God. Whence that spirit, whereby they call *God their Father*, and, with confidence apply to him as such, is called *the Spirit of adoption.*

Moreover, this wonderful restoration is often called adoption, not only to distinguish it from the natural and incomparable dignity, which belongs to the only begotten Son; but also because we, by no means, derive this privilege from nature, but absolutely from the free donation of the Father, through the mediation of his only Son. We must not, however, conclude from this, that this privilege has nothing more in it than an honourable title, or, as they call it, an external relation. For it is not only inseparably connected with a real and internal change, but with a remarkable *renovation*, and, as it were, a *transformation* of all the faculties of the soul, nay, even of the whole man. You will accordingly find these words applied to this purpose, by the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans [n]. And, to conclude, it is with a view to convince us, that, together with the title of sons, the spirit of God is given to believers, and they are inwardly renewed thereby, that we, so often, in scripture meet with this *regeneration*, which is the subject of our present discourse.

If we consider the lives of men, we will be apt to imagine, that the generality of mankind, who live in the world under the name of Christians, think it sufficient for them to be called by this name, and dream of nothing further. The common sort of mankind hear with pleasure and delight of free remission of sins, imputed righteousness, of the dignity of the sons of God, and the eternal inheritance annexed to that dignity; but when they are told, that repentance, a new heart, and a new life, contempt of the world and the pleasures of the flesh, fasting and prayer, are absolutely necessary for a Christian, "These are hard sayings, who can bear them?" Though at the same time, it must be

[n] Rom. xii. 2.

said, that they, who do not regard these necessary duties, will have no share in the reward annexed to them.

There are many things which distinguish this divine adoption from that which obtains among men. 1st, The former is not an expedient to supply the want of children, which is commonly the case among men; for God has his only begotten Son, who is incomparably preferable to all the rest taken together, who is immortal as his Father; and though, from a principle of wonderful humility, he condescended to become mortal, and even to die, yet he rose again from the dead, and liveth for ever. From him is derived all that felicity, which our heavenly Father is pleased to confer upon us, out of his mere grace and bounty, through the merits and mediation of his dear Son. And is there any one, on whom this felicity is bestowed, who will not freely acknowledge himself to be quite unworthy of so great an honour *.

Yet such honour has the eternal and incomprehensible love of God condescended to bestow on us, who are quite unworthy and undeserving; and in this also the divine adoption differs from that which is customary among men, who generally chuse the most deserving they can meet with. But all those, whom God maketh choice of, are unworthy, and some even are remarkably so. 2dly, Men generally adopt but one apiece, or at most a few; but divine adoption admits into the heavenly family a most numerous host, extending even unto myriads, that Jesus, who is the head of the family, "may be the first born among many brethren." And, 3dly, They are all heirs; whence it is said, in another place, "That he might bring many sons into glory." Nor is the inheritance of any individual in the least diminished in consequence of so vast a multitude of heirs; for it is an *inheritance in light*, and every one has the whole of it. Nor do the children come

* Haud equidem tali me dignor honore. Virg. Æneid i.

into the possession of this inheritance by the death of the Father, but every one, when he dies himself; for the Father is immortal, and, according to the apostle, the "only one that has immortality;" that is, in an absolute, primary, and independent sense. Nay, he himself is the eternal inheritance of his sons, and death alone brings them into his presence, and admits them into the full enjoyment of him. 4thly, Which I would have particularly observed, this divine adoption is not a matter of mere external honour, nor simply the bestowing of riches and an inheritance; but always attended with a real internal change of the man himself, to a being quite different from what he was before; which is also recorded in sacred scripture, concerning Saul, when he was anointed king; but this human adoption can by no means perform. This last, in the choice of a proper object, justly pays regard to merit; for though the richest and even the best of men, may cloath richly the person whom he has thought proper to adopt, and get him instructed in the best principles and rules of conduct; yet he cannot effectually divest him of his innate dispositions, or those manners that have become natural by custom: he cannot form his mind to noble actions, nor plant within him the principles of fortitude and virtue. But he that formed the heart of man, can reform it at his pleasure: and this he actually does: whenever he admits a person into his royal family, he, at the same time, endows him with royal and divine dispositions: and, therefore, if he honours any person with his love, that person, thereby, becomes deserving; because, if he was not so before, he makes him so; he stamps his own image upon him in true and lively colours; and as he is holy himself, he makes him holy likewise. Hence it is, that this heavenly adoption is no less properly, truly, or frequently, in the sacred scriptures, called *regeration* *.

* Παλιγγενεσία.

And though a Jew, and a celebrated doctor of the Jewish law, excepted against this doctrine, when it was proposed to him under this name; yet neither all of that nation, nor even the Gentile philosophers, were quite unacquainted with it. Rabbi Israel calls the proselytes, new-born Jews. And these passages, which we frequently meet with, concerning the seed of Abraham, and in the prophets, concerning the numerous converts that were to be made to the church, are by their Rabbins, and the Chaldee paraphrase, applied to this spiritual generation, which they believed would remarkably take place in the days of the Messiah; particularly these two passages in the Psalms, in one whereof the spiritual sons of the church are compared to the drops of the *morning dew*[k], not only on account of its celestial purity, but also with regard to the vast multitude of them. Some of these doctors also observe, that the number of proselytes would be so great in the days of the Messiah, that the church, omitting the ceremony of circumcision, would receive them into its bosom, and initiate them by ablution or baptism. Concerning this renovation of the mind, Philo Judæus says expressly, "God who is unbegotten himself, and begets all things, sows this seed, as it were, with his own hand, &c. *" Hierocles, and other Pythagorean philosophers, treat also of this moral or mystical regeneration; and under this very name Plutarch also makes mention of it, and defines it to be "the mortification of irrational and irregular appetites;" and Seneca's words relative to this subject are, "The families of the arts and sciences are the most noble, chuse into which of them you will be adopted, for by this means we may be born according to our own choice;

[k] Psal. xlv. 16. Psal. cx. iii.

* ἀγένητος ὁ Θεός, καὶ τὰ συμπαντά φὲνῶν, σπείρει μεν τοῦτο το γενημα τὸ ἴδιον. &c.

nor will you be adopted into the name only, but also into the goods of the family †."

Is not also the common custom, that prevailed among the ancients, of honouring their heroes, and those men who were remarkable for exalted virtue, with the title of *sons of God*, a plain allusion to this adoption we have under our consideration? And what we have observed on the philosophers, who acknowledged this moral or metaphorical regeneration, is so very true, that it gave a handle to the fictions of those ancient heretics, who evaded the whole doctrine and faith of the last resurrection, by putting this figurative sense upon it. As to what the Roman philosopher observes, that we may be born in this manner at our own pleasure or discretion, though, to be sure, it is not without our consent, yet it does not altogether, nor principally depend upon us; our sacred and apostolic doctrine presents us with much more just and pure notions on this subject, when it teaches us, that "of his own will he begat us by the word of truth [k]." This is also represented in express terms in those words of the gospel, which immediately follow the passage we mentioned at the beginning of this discourse, "which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God [l]." And, with great propriety, there is immediately added another *generation* still more wonderful and mysterious, which is the principal and source of this renovation of ours, "the word was made flesh." For to this end, God was pleased to clothe himself with our flesh, that he might put his spirit within us, whereby we, though carnal in consequence of the corruption of our nature, might be born again into a new, spiritual and divine life. The Holy Ghost, by overshadowing the blessed virgin, was, in a very particular manner, the author of the hu-

† Nobilissimæ sunt ingeniorum familiæ, elige in quam adsciscî velis, hac enim ratione, nobis ad arbitrium nostrum nasci licet, nec in nomen tantum adoptaberis, sed & in ipsa bona.

[k] James i. 18. [l] John i. 13.

man nature of the Son of God, and to the virtue and divine power of the same spirit all the adopted children of the Deity owe their new birth. And as creation goes sometimes under the name of generation, for instance, in the words of Moses, "of the rock that begot thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten the God that formed thee[m];" that book also of the Bible, which, from the first word of it, is called *Bereshith*, is by the Greeks named *Genesis*, and in the oldest copy of the Septuagint, *the generation of the world.* And, in the beginning of it, Moses speaking of the creation of the world, says, "These are the generations of the heaven and the earth[n]." So, on the other hand, this spiritual generation is called creation, and with an additional epithet, *the new creation*; it has also, for its author, the same powerful spirit of God, who of old sat upon the face of the waters as a bird upon its young, or as St. Basil renders it, hatched; so also in conversion the same spirit rests upon our uninformed minds, that are lifeless, unprepared, and nothing at all but emptiness and obscurity, and out of this darkness brings forth light, which was the first and most beautiful ornament of the universe; to which the apostle also alludes in his second epistle to the Corinthians[o]. The resurrection of the dead is also the peculiar work of this enlivening spirit of God; and to him the apostle Peter expressly ascribes the resurrection of Christ; "For Christ also, says he, hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit[p]." And here, again, there is a mutual exchange of names; for in the gospel according to Matthew, the resurrection of the dead is called the regeneration, "Verily I say unto you, says our Lord, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne

[m] Deut. xxxii. 18. [n] Gen. ii. 4. [o] 2 Cor. iv. 6. [p] 1 Pet. iii. 18.

of his glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones[q]." Here, *in the regeneration* must be connected with the following words, and by no means with those that go before. And that this was a common method of speaking among the Jews, appears from Josephus, "To those, says he, whose fate it is to die for observing the law, God has given the privileges of being born again, and enjoying a more happy life, so that they are gainers by the exchange*." In like manner Philo saith, "We shall hasten to the regeneration after death, &c.†" On the other hand, it is very well known, that this spiritual regeneration we are speaking of, is often in scripture called the resurrection.

Of this resurrection the word of the gospel is, as it were, the trumpet; and, at the same time, the immortal seed of this new birth, and therefore of immortality itself. Thus it is represented by the apostle Peter[r], and by the apostle James, who expressly tells us, "That he hath begotten us with the word of truth[s]." Now the enlivening virtue and plastic power of this word is derived from the Holy Ghost, who is the true spring and fountain of this new life. Nor are the most extended powers of the human mind, or the strength of its understanding, any more able to restore this life within it, even upon hearing the glad tidings of the gospel, than it was capable of producing itself at first, or of being the author of its own being, or after death of restoring itself to life.

To this exalted dignity are admitted the humble, the poor, the obscure, the ignorant, barbarians, slaves, sinners, whom the world look upon as nothing, and hold in the greatest contempt: of these nothing is required but true and sincere faith; no learning, nor noble extract, nor any submission to

[q] Matt. xix. 28.

* Τοῖς ὑπὲρ νόμων διαφυλαχθέντων ἀποθανοῦσι ἔδωκεν ὁ Θεὸς γίνεσθαι τὸ πάλιν καὶ βίον ἀμείνω λαβεῖν ἐκ περιτροπῆς. Lib. i. cont. App.

† εἰς παλιγγενεσίαν ὁρμησομεν μετα τὸν θάνατον, &c.

[r] 1 Pet. i. 23. [s] Jam. i. 18.

the Mosaic law, but upon every man, of whatever rank or condition, who believes this word, he in return bestows this dignity, "that they should become the sons of God;" that is, that what Christ was by nature, they should become by grace. Now, what is more sublime and exalted than this honour, that those, who were formerly *children of Satan*, and *heirs of hell*, should by faith alone be made the sons of God, brethren of Christ, and joint heirs of the heavenly kingdom?" If the sacred fire of the Romans happened at any time to be extinguished, it could only be lighted again at the rays of the sun. The life of souls, to be sure, is a sacred flame of divine love; this flame, as we are now born into the froward race of fallen mankind, is, alas! but too truly and unhappily extinguished, and by no means to be kindled again, but by the enlivening light and heat of the *sun of righteousness*, who is most auspiciously risen upon us.

LECTURE XVI.

Of REGENERATION.

THE great corruption of mankind, and their innate dispostion to every sort of wickedness, even the doctors of the heathen nations, that is, their philosophers and theologers, and their poets also, were sensible of, and acknowledged; though they were quite ignorant of the source from which this calamity was derived. They all own, "That it is natural to man to sin*;" even your favourite philosopher, who prevails in the schools, declares, that we are *strongly inclined* to vice †; and speaking of the charms and allurements of forbidden pleasures, he observes, that mankind by nature "is easily catched in these snares ‡." The Roman philosopher takes notice, "That the way to vice is not only a descent, but a downright precipice §"

And the comic poet, "That mankind has always been, in every respect, a deceitful, subtle creature ‖."

The satyrist likewise observes, "That we are all easily prevailed on to imitate things that are, in their nature, wicked and disgraceful ¶."

And the Lyric poet, "That the human race, bold

* Συμφύτον εἶναί τοῖς ἀνθρώποις το ἁμαρτάνειν.

† ἐυκαταφόρως. Arist. Eth. ii.

‡ ἐυθήρατον εἶναι ὑπό τῶν τοιετῶν.

§ Ad vitia, non tantum pronum iter, sed et præceps.

‖ Δόλερος μὲν ἀει κατὰ τὰνῖα δὴ τρόπον.
Πέφυκε ἀνθρωπος.

¶ ——— Dociles imitandis
Turpibus & pravis omnes sumus. JUV. Satyr. xiv.

to attempt the greatest dangers, rushes with impetuosity upon forbidden crimes *."

All the wise men among the heathens exerted their utmost, to remedy this evil by precepts and institutions of philosophy, but to very little purpose. They could not, by all their arts and all their precepts, make others better; nay, with regard to most of them, we may say, nor even themselves. But, "when there was no wisdom in the earth, says Lactantius, that blessed doctor was sent down from heaven, who is the way, the truth, and the life †," and, by an almighty power, effected what all others had attempted in vain.

It is not at all to be doubted, but the end proposed by philosophy, was to renew and to reform mankind, and to reduce the course of their lives to a conformity with the precepts of wisdom and virtue. Whence the common definition given of philosophy, is, "That it is the rule of life, and the art or science of living uprightly." To this purpose Seneca says, "Philosophy is the law of living honestly and uprightly." True religion, to be sure, has the same tendency: but it promotes its end with much greater force, and better success; because its principles are much more exalted, its precepts and instructions are of greater purity, and it is, besides, attended with a divine power, whereby it makes its way into the hearts of men, and purifies them with the greatest force and efficacy; and yet, at the same time, with the most wonderful pleasure and delight. And this is the regeneration of which we are speaking, and whereof we have already observed, that philosophy acknowledged it, even under the same name; but that it effected it, we absolutely deny. Now, it is evident from the

* ——— Audax omnia perpeti,
Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas. Hor. Od. lib. i.

† Sed cum nulla esset sapientia in terris, missus este cœlo doctor ille, via, veritas & vita.

very name, that we are to understand by it an inward change, and that a very remarkable one. And since God is called the author and source of this change, whatever the philosophers may have disputed, *pro* and *con*, concerning the origin of moral virtue, we are, by no means, to doubt, but this sacred and divine change upon the heart of man, is produced by an influence truly divine: and this was even Plato's opinion concerning virtue; nor do I imagine you are unacquainted with it. The same philsopher, and several others besides him, expressly asserted, that virtue was a kind of image or likeness of God, nay, that it was the effect of inspiration, and partook, in some respect, of a kind of divine nature. "No mind can be rightly disposed without divine influence," says Seneca*: And it was the saying of the Pythagorean philosophers, "That the end of man is to be made like to God†." "This mind, says Trismegistus, is God in man, and therefore some of the number of men are gods‡." And a little further on, "In whatever souls the mind presides, it illustrates them with its own brightness, opposing their immoralities and mad inclinations, just as a learned physician inflicts pain upon the body of his patient, by burning and cutting it, in order to recover it to health: in the same manner, the mind afflicts a voluptuous soul, that it may pull up pleasure by the very roots; for all diseases of the soul proceed from it: impiety is the severest distemper of the soul§."

What wonder is it then, if these very thoughts are expressed in the more divine oracles of the sacred scriptures, more fully, and with greater clearness? And this conformation of the human mind to the

* Nulla sine Deo bona mens est.

† Τελος ἄνθρώπῳ ὁμοίωσις Θεῷ.

‡ ὗτος ὁ νῶς ἐν μέν ἀνθρώποις θεὸς ἐστίν, διό καὶ τίνες των ανθρώπων θεόι εισι. Trismeg. περὶ νῦ κοινῦ πρὸς τατ.

§ ὅσαις ἄν νῦν ψύχαις, &c.

divine nature, is commonly represented therein, as the great business, and the end of all religion.

What was more frequently inculcated upon the ancient church of the Jews, than these words, "Be ye holy, because I am holy?". And that the same ambition is recommended to Christians, appears from the first sermon we meet with in the gospel, of our Lord and Saviour, who came down to this earth, that he might restore the divine image upon men. "Be merciful, says he, as your Father, who is in heaven, is merciful." And, according to Luke, "Be perfect, as your Father is perfect." And again, "Blessed are the pure in heart." And indeed, this is the true beauty of the heart, and its true nobility; but vice introduces degeneracy, and deformity also.

Now, the more the mind disengages and withdraws itself from *matter that pollutes it* *, that is, from the body it inhabits, the purer and more divine it constantly becomes; because it attains to a greater resemblance with the Father of spirits; and, as the apostle Peter expresses it, "partakes more fully of the divine nature." Hence it is, that the apostle Paul warns us at so great length, and in such strong terms, against *living after the flesh*, as the very death of the soul, and directly opposite to the renewed nature of a Christian. He that is born of God, is endued with a greatness of soul, that makes him easily despise, and consider as nothing, those things, which he prized at a very high rate before: he considers heaven as his country; even while he lives as a stranger on this earth, he aspires at the highest objects, and "flying up towards heaven, with soaring wings, looks down with contempt upon the earth †."

* ἀπὸ της ὑλῆς βορβορώσας.

† ——————— udam
Spernit humum fugiente penna.

And yet, with all this sublimity of mind, he joins the deepest humility. But all the allurements of sin, "though they continue to have the same appearance they had before *," and possibly throw themselves in his way, as the very same that were formerly dear to him, he will reject with indignation, and give them the same answer that St. Ambrose tells us was given by a young convert to his mistress, with whom he had formerly lived in great familiarity; "though you may be the same, I am not the same I was before †."

Lactantius elegantly sets forth the wonderful power of religion in this respect: "Give me, says he, a man that is passionate, a slanderer, one that is headstrong and unmanageable, with a very few of the words of God, I will make him as quiet as a lamb. Give me a covetous, avaricious or close-handed person, I will presently make him liberal, and oblige him to give away his money in large quantities with his own hands. Give me one that is afraid of pain or of death, he shall, in a very little time, despise crosses, flames, and even Phalaris's bull. Shew me a lustful person, an adulterer, a compleat debauchee, you shall presently see him sober, chaste, and temperate ‡." So great is the power of divine wisdom, that, as soon as it is infused into the human breast, it presently expels folly, which is the source and fountain of sin, and so changes the whole man, so refines, and as it were, renews him, that you would not know him to be the same. It is prophesied of the days of the Messiah, "That the wolf and the lamb shall lie

* Etsi illis facies, quæ fuit ante, manet.

† At ego certe non sum ego.

‡ Da mihi virum qui sit iracundus, maledicus, effrænatus, paucissimis Dei verbis tam placidum quam ovem reddam. Da cupidum, avarum, tenacem, jam tibi eum liberalem dabo, & pecuniam suam propriis plenisq; manibus largientem. Da timidum doloris ac mortis; jam cruces, & ignes, & Phalaridis taurum contemnet. Da libidinosum, adulterum, Ganeonem; jam sobrium, castum, continentem videbis,

down together, and the leopard feed with the kid." The gospel has a wonderful effect in softening even the roughest dispositions, and "there is none so wild, but he may be tamed, if he will but patiently give attention to this wholesome doctrine *."

Now, whether you call this renovation or change of the mind repentance, or divine love, it makes no difference; for all these, and indeed all the Christian graces in general, are at bottom one and the same; and, taken together, *constitute what we may call the health and vigour of the mind*, the term under which Aristo of Chios comprehended all the moral virtues. The apostle Paul, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, describes these adopted children of God by their repentance [g]; in the epistle to the Romans, they are characterised by their love [h]; and in the passage of St. John's gospel, we have mentioned already, by their faith [k]; but whatever name it is conveyed by, "the change itself is effected by the right hand of the Most High." As to the manner of this divine operation, to raise many disputes about it, and make many curious disquisitions with regard to it, would be not only quite needless, but even absurd. Solomon in his Ecclesiastes, gives some grave admonitions with regard to the secret processes of nature in forming the fœtus in the womb [l], to convince us of our blindness with respect to the other works of God: how much more hidden and intricate, and even past our finding out, is this regeneration, which is purely spiritual? This is what our Saviour also teaches us, when he compares this new birth to the unconfined and unknown turnings and revolutions of the wind; a similitude which Solomon had lightly touched before, in that passage of the Ecclesiastes, to which we just now alluded. O! that

* Nemo adeo ferus est, ut non mitescere possit
Huic modo doctrinæ patientem commodet aurem.

[g] 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. [h] Rom. viii. 28. [k] John i. 12.
[l] Eccl. xi. 5.

we felt within ourselves this blessed change, though we should remain ignorant with regard to the manner of it; since we are sufficiently apprised of one thing, which it is greatly our interest frequently and seriously to reflect upon: "Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This spiritual progeny is also compared to the dew, the generation whereof is hidden and undiscovered. "Hath the rain a father, and who hath begotten the drops of the dew[p]? Good men are also called *children of light*[q], and *light in the Lord*[r]. But it is from *the Father of lights* himself, and from his only begotten Son, that these stars (for this title of the angels may, without injustice, be applied to them) derive all the light they enjoy. Now, the nature of light is very intricate, and the emanation and the manner of its production, is yet a secret even to the most sharp sighted of those who have made nature their study, and no satisfactory theory of it has yet appeared. But whatever it is, it was produced by that first and powerful word of eternal uncreated light, "Let there be light." By the same powerful word of the Almighty Father, there immediately springs up in the mind, which was formerly quite involved in the darkness of ignorance and error, a divine and immortal light, which is the life of men, and, in effect, the true regeneration. And because this is the most effectual means of purifying the soul, it is ascribed to the water and to the spirit. For this illumination of the Holy Ghost is, indeed, the inward baptism of the spirit; but in the primitive times of Christianity, the baptism of water, on account of the supposed concurrence of the spirit, was commonly called the *illumination*, and the solemn seasons appointed for the celebration of this mystery, the days of *illumination* or *light*. And in the very same manner, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, is by John Baptist called the *baptism of fire*, on account of the won-

[p] Job xxxiii. 28. [q] 1 Thes. v. 5. [r] Eph. v. 8.

wonderful influence it has in illuminating and purifying the soul. It is, to be sure, a celestial fire, quite invisible to our eyes, and of such a nature, that the secret communications of it to our souls cannot be investigated; but the sum of all is what follows.

It seemed good to infinite goodness and wisdom, to form a noble piece of coin out of clay, and to stamp his own image upon it, with this inscription, "The earthly son of God:" this is what we call man. But, alas! how soon did this piece of coin fall back to clay again, and thereby lost that true image, and had the inscription shamefully blotted out? From that time, man, who was formerly a divine creature, and an angel cloathed with flesh, became entirely fleshy, and in reality a brute: the soul, that noble and celestial inhabitant of his earthly body, became now quite immersed in matter, and, as it were, entirely converted into flesh, as if it had drunk of the river Lethe; or, like the son of an illustrious family, carried away in infancy to a far country, it is quite ignorant of its present misery, or the liberty and felicity it has lost, becomes an abject slave, degraded to the vilest employments, which it naturally and with pleasure performs; because having lost all sense of its native excellency and dignity, and forgotten its heavenly original, it now relishes nothing but earthly things, and catching at present advantages, disregards eternal enjoyments, as altogether unknown, or removed quite out of sight. But if in any particular soul, either from some spark of its native excellency still remaining alive, or any indistinct report that reaches it, some desires or emotions towards the recovery of its native liberty should arise; yet as it has no sufficient strength of its own, nor finds any way open, that can lead to so great a blessing, these ineffectual wishes come to nothing, and the unhappy soul, having lost its hopes, languishes in its chains, and is at last quite stupified.

Philosophy, as we have already observed, perceiving that man was born to higher views than this world affords, attempted to raise him from his present dejection, secure his claim to heaven, and restore him to a conformity and likeness to God; but in vain. To redeem the sons of man, and restore them to what they had lost, it was necessary that the eternal Son of God should come down from heaven. Our fall was easily brought about, but our restoration was a work of the greatest difficulty, and only to be performed by the powerful hand of God; there are but few whom the exalted Father of spirits has loved, and Christ has raised up to heaven. He is the source whence the spirit of God flows down to us, he is the fountain of that new life, and sanctified nature, by which we mount towards God, whereby we overcome the world, and, in consequence thereof, are admitted into heaven. And, happy, to be sure, are those truly noble souls, whose fate it is to be thus born again, to be admitted into the choirs of the holy angels, and to be cloathed with those glorious robes that are whiter than snow: they will follow the Lamb whereever he goes, and he will lead them to the chrystal streams, and even to the fountain of life itself.

But all those, that are to be the attendants of the Lamb in those blessed pastures, which are to be met with in his heavenly country, must of necessity, even while they live in this lower world, be followers of him in his humble innocence and purity. This *spotless, holy,* and *pure Lamb of God,* is the guide and shepherd of a pure and holy flock, a flock dear to *God,* and of *distinguished beauty*; *but the shepherd is still more beautiful than they.**" But the impure goats, and uncleanly hogs, he beholds at a distance, and leaves them to unclean spirits, to be possessed by them at pleasure, and afterwards to be precipitated into the depth of

* Formosi pecoris custos formosior.

misery; unless it be determined to deliver some of them from that shocking form, by a wonderful and divine change, and to convert them into lambs, which is effected in proper time by the influence of the Holy Ghost. Whence they are called the holy, pure, and divine sons of God; and all love to earthly things, all carnal, impure affections, are banished out of those hearts; which are, as it were, temples consecrated henceforth to God: "for the dwelling place of the Holy One must be holy also *."

* ἁγιου γάρ ἅγιον ἐστι οἰκητήριον.

LECTURE XVII.

Of TRUE FELICITY *and* ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

O HOW insipid and unsatisfactory are all the pleasures of this earthly life, which we now live, in respect of that incomparable, and altogether heavenly delight, which attends the meditation and contemplation of divine things! When mortals are thus employed, they eat the bread of angels; and if there are any, who do not relish the sweetness of this food, it is because the divine part of their composition is become brutish, and, forgetting its original, lies buried in earth and mud. But though the soul is reduced to these woeful circumstances, it is not yet so entirely divested of itself, but it still retains some faint remains of its heavenly original and more exalted nature; insomuch, that it cannot acquiesce in, or be at all satisfied with those fading enjoyments, wherewith it is surrounded, nor think itself happy or easy in the greatest abundance of earthly comforts. And though, possibly, it may not be fully sensible of what it wants; yet it perceives, not without some pain and uneasiness, that something is still wanting to make it happy. The truth is, besides that great and unknown good, even those, whom by an abuse of that term we call most happy, are in want of a great many things: for if we look narrowly into the condition of those, who are arrived at the highest pitch of earthly splendor, we shall certainly find some defect, and imperfection in it, and be obliged to conclude with the poet, "That since the earth began to be inhabited by men, a full cup of good things, without any mixture

of evil, never fell to the share of one man; a graceful body is often dishonoured by bad morals, and a mind of uncommon beauty is sometimes joined to a deformed body, &c.*."

But what we call the chief and supreme good must, of necessity, be compleat, and entirely free from every defect; and therefore, what is not in every respect perfect, properly speaking, is not perfect at all. The happiness of rich and great men, which the poor admire and respect, is only a gaudy and splendid species of misery. What St. Bernard says of the rash and ill-founded opinion, which the generality of mankind form, of the lives of the saints, from the imperfect knowledge they have of them, "They see our crosses, but they see not our comforts†," may be here inverted: we see the advantages of those men, that are puffed up with riches and honours, but we see not their troubles and vexations. "I wish, I wish, says one, that those, who desire riches, would consult with rich men; they would then, to be sure, be of another opinion‡."

I will spend no more time in describing or lamenting the wretched state of mankind on this earth, because it would answer no end. For, suppose a more compleat assemblage of sublunary enjoyments, and a more perfect system of earthly felicity than ever the sun beheld, the mind of man would instantly devour it, and, as if it was still empty and unsatisfied, would require something more. And indeed, by this insatiable thirst, the mind of man

* ——— Etenim mortalibus ex quo
Tellus cæpta coli, nunquam sincera bonorum
Sors ulli concessa viro; quem corpus honestat
Dedecorant mores; animus quem pulchrior ornat
Corpus destituit, &c.

† Cruces nostras vident, unctiones non vident.

‡ Utinam, utinam qui divitias appetunt, cum divitibus deliberarent; certe vota mutarent.

discovers its natural excellence and dignity; for thus it proves, that all things here below are insufficient to satisfy, or make it happy; and its capacity is so great and extensive, that it cannot be filled by the whole of this visible frame of things. For as St. Augustine observes, "Thou hast made us, O Lord, for thyself, and our hearts are restless till they return to thee*." The mind, that makes God its refuge, after it has been much tossed to and fro, and distressed in the world, enjoys perfect peace, and absolute security; and it is the fate of those, and those only, who put into this safe harbour, to have, what the same St. Augustine calls a very great matter, "The frailty of man, together with the security of God†."

Therefore, it is not without reason, that the royal Psalmist boasts not of his victories, nor the splendor of his royal crown, but of this one advantage; "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup thou maintainest my lot:" and on the justest grounds, he immediately adds, "The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage[h]." And it is quite agreeable to reason, that what improves and compleats any thing else, must be itself more compleat and perfect: so that the mind of man can neither be made happy by earthly enjoyments, which are all far inferior to it in dignity, nor be so in itself. Nay, neither can the angels, though of a more perfect and sublime nature, confer felicity either upon men, or themselves; but both they and we have our happiness lodged in that eternal mind, which alone is its own felicity; nor is it possible for us to find it any where else, but in our union with that original wisdom and goodness, from which we at first took our rise. Away then with

* Fecisti nos, Domine, propter te, & inquietum est cor nostrum, donec in te redeat.

† Habere fragilitatem hominis & securitatem Dei.

[h] Psalm xvi. 5, 6.

all the fictitious schemes of felicity proposed by the philosophers, even those of them that were most artfully contrived; for even Aristotle's perfection of virtue, as well as what the Stoics fancied concerning their wise man, are mere fictions. They are nothing but dreams and fancies, that ought to be banished to Utopia; for what they describe is no where to be found among men; and, if it were, it would not constitute compleat felicity. So far, indeed, they are to be commended, that they call in the mind from external enjoyments to itself; but in this they are defective, that when the mind is returned to itself, they carry it no further, nor direct it to ascend, as it were, above itself. They sometimes, it is true, drop such expressions as these, "That there can be no good disposition of the mind without God *;" and that, in order to be happy, the soul must be raised up to divine things: they also tell us, "That the wise man loves God most of all, and for this reason is the most happy man †." But these expressions they drop only at random, and by the by. O! how much fuller and clearer are the instructions of the teacher sent down from heaven; "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God [i]."

But because the purest minds of the Saints, while they sojourn in this earth, still retain some mixture of earthly dross, and arise not to perfect purity; therefore, they cannot yet enjoy the full vision of God, nor, consequently, that perfect happiness, which is inseparably connected with it. "For they see only darkly, and through a glass [k];" but with the advantage even of this obscure light, they direct their steps, and go on chearful and unwearied: the long-wished-for day will at length come, when they will be admitted into the fullest light. That day,

* Nullam posse esse sine Deo bonam mentem.

† Ἆρα ὁ σόφος θεοφιλέστατος, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο εὐδαιμονέστατος.

[i] Matt. v. 3.

[k] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

which the unhappy men of this world dread as their last, the sons of light wish for, as their nativity into an endless life, and embrace it with the greatest joy when it comes. And this, indeed, seems to me to be the strongest argument for another life, and an immortality to come: For since no compleat, or absolutely perfect happiness is to be found in this life, it must certainly follow, that either there is no such thing to be had any where, or we must live again somewhere, after our period here is out. And, O! what fools are we, and slow of heart to believe, that think so rarely, and with such coolness, of that blessed country; and that, in this parched and thirsty land, where even those few, who are so happy, have only some foretastes of that supreme happiness; but when they remove hence, "They shall be abundantly satisfied, or, as the word ought to be translated, intoxicated *, O Lord, with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures[1]:" thus the divine Psalmist expresses it; and, to be sure, it is very surprising, that the great and antient philosopher Pythagoras, in communicating his thoughts upon the same subject, should happen to fall upon the very same figure: For he used to promise those of his disciples, that conducted themselves right in this life, that they should be continually drunk † in that which is to come.

But what we have said formerly of the felicity of the life to come, and all that we could say, were we to treat of the same subject over again, is but mere trifling. And yet it is not disagreeable to hear children speak, even with stammering, about the dignity of their Father, and of the riches and magnificence of his inheritance. It is pleasant and decent to speak of our native country, even while we are sojourning in a foreign land: but, for the present, I shall insist no longer on this subject, but, turning

* Inebriabuntur.

† Μεθὴν ἀίνασον.

[1] Psm. xxxvi. 9.

the tables, lay before you that dreadful punishment; which stands in opposition to this happiness, by presenting you only with a transient view of the future misery of the wicked; and though this is indeed a most unpleasant task, yet nothing but our own carelessness, and inattention, can render it useless.

Here, first of all, it is to be observed, that as, in this life, there is no perfect felicity; so, neither here is there any compleat misery. Those, whom we look upon as the most wretched in this world, have their sufferings checquered with many intervals of ease; but the misery to come admits of no abatement; it is all of a piece, without admitting any mixture of relief. They are surely mad with their notions, who here talk of the advantages of being or existence, and contend that it is more desirable " to be miserable, than not to be at all*." For my part, I am fully satisfied, they can never persuade any man of the truth of their assertion; nor even believe it themselves, when they think seriously on the subject. But not to insist on this, it is certain, that all kind of delights are for ever banished from that eternal and frightful prison. There is there no light, no day, nor sleep, which is the blessing of the night: and, indeed, nothing at all but places full of darkness, precipices, nakedness, and all kinds of horror; no entertainments, merry meetings, nor any sensible pleasure; and to be for ever separated from all such, must be no small misery, especially to those who used to pass their time amidst such scenes of mirth and jollity, and imagined themselves in some measure happy therein; and that the remembrance of this may distress them the more, they will be continually haunted with a thought, that will cleave to them like a worm devouring their bowels, and constantly keep them in mind that out of a distracted fondness for these fleeting pleasures, which have now flown away, without hope of returning, they have

* Miserum esse quam non esse.

lost those joys that are heavenly and eternal, whereof they will have some knowledge; but what kind of knowledge that will be, and how far extended to enhance their torments, is not ours to determine. But who will attempt to express the excess of their misery, or describe those streams of brimstone, and eternal flames of divine wrath? or rather, who will not tremble, I say, not in describing them, but even in thinking of them, and be quite overpowered with an idea so shocking?

That I may no further attempt "to speak things unutterable*, and to derogate from a grand subject by inadequate expressions†:" Behold now, my dear youths, if you believe these things, behold, I say, you have now life and death laid before you, chuse for yourselves. And that you may not put off a matter of such importance, consider these things, pray, seriously, and say to yourselves, concerning the vanishing shadows of external things, How long will these enjoyments last, O! how soon will they pass? Even while I am speaking these words, while I am thinking of them, they fly past me. Is any one oppressed with calamities? Let them say chearfully with a remarkably good man, "Lord, while I am here, kill me, burn me, only spare me there‡." Is there any among you of weak capacity, unhappy in expressing himself, of an unfavourable aspect, or deformed in body? Let him say with himself, it is a matter of small consequence: I shall soon leave this habitation; and, if I am but good myself, be soon removed to the mansions of the blessed. Let these thoughts prevent his being dejected in mind, or overcome with too much sorrow. If any one is distinguished by a good understanding, or outward beauty, or riches, let him reflect, and seriously consider, how soon all excellencies of this kind will pass

* Τὰ ἀλάλητα λαλεῖσθαι.

† Magna modis tenuare parvis.

‡ Domine, hic ure, cæde, modo ibi parcas.

away, that he may not be vain, or lifted up with the advantages of fortune. Let it be the chief care and study of you all, to avoid the works of darkness, that so you may escape utter and eternal darkness; embrace with open and chearful hearts that divine light, which hath shone from heaven; that, when you are divested of these bodies, you may be received into the glorious mansions of that blessed and perfect light.

LECTURE XVIII.

Of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, *and that it is the true way to Happiness.*

I CONFESS, young gentlemen, that whenever I think on the subject, I cannot help wondering at the indolence and madness of mankind. For though we boast, that, to order our affairs with prudence and discretion, and conduct our lives according to the principles of reason, is the great privilege and ornament of our nature, that distinguishes us from the brute creatures; how few are there, that, in this respect, act like men, that propose to themselves an end, and direct all their actions to the attainment of it? It is very certain, that the greatest part of mankind, with a folly something more than childish, go in quest of painted butterflies, or commonly pursue the birds with stones and clods; and even those, who spin out their lives to the utmost extent of old age, for the most part gain little by it, but only this, that they may be called very aged children *, being as ignorant as infants why they came into the world, and what will become of them when they leave it. Of all questions, therefore, none can be more properly proposed to you, who are just upon the verge of manhood, I mean entering upon a rational life, than this, Whither are you going? What good have you in view? To what end do you propose to live? For hence, possibly, your minds may be excited within you, to an earnest desire after that perfect and supreme good, and you may not content yourselves with cool speculations upon this subject, as if it were a logical or philosophical problem, that falls in your

* Παῖδες πολυχρόνιοι.

way of course; but with that application, that is proper in a question concerning a matter of the greatest moment, where it highly concerns us to be well informed, and where the highest rewards and greatest dangers are proposed to our view. And in this hope, I have often addressed myself to you upon the subject of happiness, or the supreme good, at different periods of time, entertaining you in the intervals with essays and suitable exhortations upon other subjects; yet so as to observe a kind of method, and keep up a connection throughout the whole. I have taken notice of the name, and general notion of happiness, the universal desires and wishes whereby men are excited to the pursuit of it, the no less universal, because natural ignorance of mankind, and their errors and mistakes in the search of it. Whence it happens, that, as they all run in the wrong road, the faster they advance, the further they depart from it; and like those who ply the oars in a boat, they look one way, and move another. And though it seemed almost unnecessary, as facts sufficiently demonstrate the truth of our assertion, yet by a brief recapitulation, wherein we took notice only of the principal heads and classes of things, we proved that happiness is, by no means, to be found in this earth, nor in any earthly enjoyments whatsoever. And this is no more than all, even fools as well as wise men, are willing to own: they not only pronounce one another unhappy, but, with regard to this life, all of them in general, and every one for himself in particular, acknowledge, that they are so; and, in this respect, experience fully justifies their belief: so that, if there were no further prospect, I am apt to believe all mankind would agree in that common saying, "That if mankind were apprised beforehand of the nature of this life, and it were left to their own option, none would accept of it*." As

* Vitam hanc, si scientibus daretur, neminem accepturum. SENECA.

the immortality of the soul has a near connection with this subject, and is a natural consequence from it, we, therefore, in the next place, bestowed some time in illustrating that doctrine. In the last place, we advanced some thoughts upon future happiness and misery, so far as is consistent with the weakness of our capacities to comprehend things so little known, and to express such as are, in a great measure, ineffable.

Having treated of these things according to our measure, it remains that we now enquire about the way, which directly leads into that happy city, or to that happiness which is reserved in the heavens. This is a great and important article, comprehending the end and design of our life, as well as the hopes and comforts of it; and is very proper to be first treated of in a catechetical, or, indeed, any methodical system of theology, as appears from reason and precedents: for by this discussion we are immediately introduced into the whole doctrine of true religion. Accordingly, the first question in the generally received Catechism, which you have in your hands, is, "What is your only consolation in life and in death *?" And the first question of another Catechism, which not long ago was used, particularly in this University, is, "What is the only way to true felicity †?" For the salvation and happiness of mankind, in subordination to the glory of God, which is, to be sure, the supreme end of all, is the peculiar and genuine scope of theology; and, from it, the definition of this science seems to be most properly drawn: nor do I imagine that any one is so weak, as from hence to conclude, that it ought to be called anthropology, rather than theology: for though it not only treats of the happiness of mankind, but also has this happiness, as has been observed, for its chief end and design; yet, with good reason, and on

* Quæ est unica tua consolatio in vita & in morte.

† Quæ est unica ad veram felicitatem via?

many accounts, it has obtained this more sublime title. It has God for its author, whom the wisest of men would in vain attempt to find out, but from the revelation he has made of himself; every such attempt being as vain as it would be to look for the sun in the night-time, by the light of a candle; for the former, like the latter, can only be seen by his own light. God cannot be known but so far as he reveals himself: which Sophocles has also admirably well expressed: "You will never," says he, "understand those divine things, which the gods have thought proper to conceal, even though you should ransack all nature*."

Nor has this sacred science God for its author only, but also for its subject and its ultimate end, because the knowledge of him, and his worship, comprehends the whole of religion; the beatific vision of him includes in it the whole of our happiness, and that happiness is at last resolved into the divine grace and bounty.

I should therefore chuse to give this brief and clear definition of theology, viz. "That it is a divine doctrine, directing man to real felicity, as his chief end, and conducting him to it by the way of true religion." I call it a *doctrine,* because it is not considered here as a habit in the mind, but as a summary of celestial truth. I call it a *divine doctrine*, for all the reasons already mentioned; because, for instance, it is from God, he is the subject of it, and it all terminates in him at last. I call it *a doctrine directing man*, for I confine my notion of it to that doctrine only, which was sent down from heaven for that purpose. What signify then those distinctions, which are indeed sounding, but quite tedious and foreign to the purpose, that divide theology into *archetypal* and *ectypal*, and again into the theology of the church militant, and that of the church

* Αλλ' ȣ̓ γάρ ἀν τὰ Θεῖα κρύπτοντος Θεȣ̃,
Μάθοις, ἀν ȣ̓δ' ἔι πάντ' ὑπεξέλθοις σκοπῶν.

triumphant? What they call archetypal theology is very improperly so named; for it is that perfect knowledge which God has of himself*: and the theology of the church triumphant, ought rather to be called the beatific vision of God †. The theology in question, "is that day springing from on high, which hath visited us, to give light to them which sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace[1]." That peace is true happiness, and the way of peace is true religion: concerning which I shall offer a few thoughts, and very briefly. First of all, you are to observe, that man is not a lawless creature, but capable of a law, and actually subject to one. This expression conveys no harsh, no dishonourable idea; nay, this subjection is so far from being a burden, that it is the greatest honour. To be capable of a law, is the mark and ornament of an intelligent rational soul, and that which distinguishes it from the brutes; it evidently supposes a resemblance to God, and an intercourse with heaven; and to live actually under the direction of religion and the law, is the great honour and ornament of human life, and what distinguishes it from the irregular conduct of the brute creation. For as the poet expresses it, "One beast devours another, fishes prey upon fishes, and birds upon birds, because they are subject to no law; but mankind lives under a just law, which makes their condition far preferable ‡."

The brute creatures devour one another without blame, because they have no law; but, as Juvenal observes, "Men alone, of all other earthly creatures, as they derive their reason from the highest heaven, are venerable for their understanding, which renders them capable of enquiring into divine things,

* αὐτοσοφία † θεοψία. [1] Luke i. 78, 79.

‡ Ἰχθύσι μὲν καὶ θηρσὶ, καὶ οἰωνοῖς πτερωτοῖς
Ἔσθιειν ἀλλήλους, ἐπεὶ οὐ δίκη ἐστὶν ἐπ' αὐτοις,
Ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἔδωκε δίκην, ἣ πολλὸν ἀρίστη
Γίγνεται.

and qualifies them for learning arts, and reducing them to practice*:"

And hence it appears, that we were born subjects to religion, and an eternal law of nature. For since our blessed Creator has thought proper to endue us with a mind and understanding, and powers sufficient for that purpose: to be sure we are bound by an indispensible law, to acknowledge the primary and eternal fountain of our own being, and of all created things, to love him above all other objects, and obey his commands without reserve or exception. So that in this very law of nature is founded a strong obligation upon us to give due obedience to every divine positive institution, which he shall think proper to add for securing the purposes of religion and equity. Wherefore, when our first parents, by eating the forbidden fruit, transgressed the symbolical command, intended as a proof of their obedience, by that very act they most basely broke the primary and great law of nature, which is the foundation of religion, and of every other law whatever.

It is not my intention to speak here of our redemption by the Messias, the only begotten Son of God the Creator; it is sufficient for our present purpose to observe, that our great Redeemer has indeed delivered us from the chains of sin and death, but has, by no means, dissolved the bonds of religion, and the everlasting law of nature: nay, these are, in many respects, strengthened and confirmed by this redemption; and a chearful submission to them by virtue of his spirit, who is poured out upon us, is a great part of that royal liberty of the sons of God, which is secured to us by his means; as by imitating his example, we arrive at the full possession of it, which is reserved for us in the heavenly kingdom. The way, therefore, to happiness, which we are in

* ——————— Venerabile soli
Sortiti ingenium divinorumq; capaces,
Atq; exercendis, capiendisq; artibus apte
Sensum a cœlesti demissum traximus arce. Juv. Sat. xv.

search of, is true religion, and such, in a very remarkable manner, is that of Christianity.

On the truth and excellence of this religion you have a great many learned writers, both antient and modern. And indeed it is exceeding plain, from its own internal evidence, that, of all the forms of religion * that ever the world saw, there is none more excellent than that of Christianity which we profess, wherein we glory, and in which we think ourselves happy, amidst all the troubles of the world: there is none that is more certain and infallible, with regard to its history; more sublime with regard to its mysteries; more pure and perfect in its precepts; or more venerable for the grave simplicity of its rites and worship: nay, it appears evident, that this religion alone is, in every respect, incomparably preferable to every other. It remains, young Gentlemen—What do you think I am going to say? It remains, that we *become true Christians.* I repeat it again, if we will be happy, *let us be Christians.* You will say, your wish is easily satisfied, you have your desire, *we are all Christians already.* I wish it may be so! I will not, however, object to any particular person upon this head? but every one of you, by a short trial, wherein he will be both witness and judge, may settle this important point within himself. *We are all Christians.* Be it so. But are we poor in spirit? Are we humble, meek, and pure in heart? Do we pray without ceasing? Have we nailed all our carnal appetites and desires to our Saviour's cross, "living no longer to ourselves, but to him that died for us?" This is the true description of a Christian, by the testimony of that gospel which we acknowledge to be Christ's. And those, who are entire strangers to these dispositions of mind, know not, to be sure, *the way of peace.* These I earnestly intreat and beseech to rouse themselves, and shake off their indolence and sloth, lest, by indulging the vile desires of

* Θρησκείας.

the flesh, they lose their souls forever. But if there are any among you, and, indeed, I believe there are some, who with all their hearts aspire to these Christian virtues, and, by their means, to that kingdom, which can never be shaken*; "Be strong in the Lord, have your loins girt about with truth, and be sober, and hope to the end." You will never repent of this holy warfare, where the battle is so short, the victory so certain, and your triumphal crown, and the peace procured by this conflict, will last for ever.

* Ασαλευτον.

LECTURE XIX.

That Holiness is the only Happiness on this Earth.

THE journey we are engaged in is indeed great, and the way up-hill; but the glorious prize, which is set before us, is also great, and our great and valiant captain, who has long ago ascended up on high, supplies us with strength. If our courage at any time fails us, let us fix our eyes upon him, and, according to the advice of the Apostle, in his divine Epistle to the Hebrews, "Look unto Jesus," removing our eyes from all inferior objects, that, being carried up aloft, they may be fixed upon him, which the original words seem to import *; then being supported by the spirit of Christ, we shall overcome all those obstacles in our way, that seem most difficult to our indolent and effeminate flesh. And, though the way from the earth towards heaven is by no means easy, yet even the very difficulty will give us pleasure, when our hearts are thus eagerly engaged, and powerfully supported. Even difficulties and hardships are attended with particular pleasure, when they fall in the way of a courageous mind; and, as the poet expresses it, "Serpents, thirst, and burning sands, are pleasing to virtue. Patience delights in hardships: and honour, when it is dearly purchased, is possessed with the greater satisfaction †."

If what we are told concerning that glorious city

* εἰς Ἰησοῦν ἀφορῶμεν. Heb. xii. 2.

† ——— Serpens, sitis, ardor arenæ
Dulcia virtuti. Gaudet patientia duris:
Lætius est quoties magno sibi constat honestum.
LUCAN, lib. ix. 9.

obtain credit with us, we will chearfully travel towards it, nor will we be at all deterred by the difficulties that may be in the way. But, however, as it is true, and more suitable to the weakness of our minds, that are rather apt to be affected with things present and near, than such as are at a great distance, we ought not to pass over in silence, that the way to the happiness reserved in heaven, which leads through this earth, is not only agreeable, because of the blessed prospect it opens, and the glorious end to which it conducts, but also for its own sake, and on account of the innate pleasure to be found in it, far preferable to any other way of life that can be made choice of, or, indeed, imagined. Nay, that we may not, by low expressions *, derogate from a matter so grand and so conspicuous, that holiness and true religion, which leads directly to the highest felicity, is itself the only happiness, as far as it can be enjoyed, on this earth. Whatever naturally tends to the attainment of any other advantage, participates, in some measure, of the nature of that advantage. Now, the way to perfect felicity, if any thing can be so, is a means that, in a very great measure, participates of the nature of its end †; nay, it is the beginning of that happiness, it is also to be considered as a part of it, and differs from it, in its compleatest state, not so much in kind, as in degree: so that in scripture it has the same names: as for instance, in that passage of the evangelist, "this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God [h]; that is not only the way to eternal life, but also the beginning and first rudiments of it, seeing the same knowledge, when compleated, or the full beatific vision of God, is eternal life in its fullness and perfection. Nor does the divine apostle make any distinction between these two: "Now, says he, we see darkly through a glass, but then we shall see openly, or,

* Μικρολογια. † Συμφυίσατου [h] John xvii. 3.

as he expresses it, face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know, as I also am known[f]." That celestial life is called an *inheritance in light*[g], and the heirs of it, even while they are sojourning in this earth, *children of the light*[h], and, expressly, *light in the Lord.* "You were, says the apostle, sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord[k]." They will be there perfectly holy, and without spot; and even here they are called holy, and, in some respect, they are so. Hence it is, that those who are really and truly good and pious, are, in scripture, often called blessed, though they are not fully and perfectly so. "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord[l]. And blessed are the undefiled in the way[m]."

Even the philosophers give their testimony to this truth, and their sentiments on this subject are not altogether to be rejected: for they, almost unanimously, are agreed, that felicity, so far as it can be enjoyed in this life, consists solely, or at least principally, in virtue: but as to their assertion, that this virtue is perfect in a perfect life, it is rather expressing what were to be wished, than describing things as they are. They might have said, with more truth and justice, that it is imperfect in an imperfect life; which, no doubt, would have satisfied them, if they had known, that it was to be made perfect in another place, and another life, that truly deserves the name, and will be compleat and perfect. In this, however, we heartily agree with them, that virtue, or, as we rather chuse to express it, piety, which is absolutely the sum and substance of all virtues, and all wisdom, is the only happiness of this life, so far as it is capable thereof.

And if we seriously consider this subject but a little, we shall find the saying of the wise king Solomon concerning this wisdom, to be unexcep-

[f] 1 Cor. xiii. 12. [g] Col. i. 12. [h] 1 Thess. v. 5.
[k] Eph. v. 8. [l] Psal. cxii. 1. [m] Psal. cxix. 1.

tionably true. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

Doth religion require any thing of us more than that we live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world? Now what, pray, can be more pleasant or peaceable than these? Temperance is always at leisure, luxury always in a hurry: the latter weakens the body and pollutes the soul, the former is the sanctity, purity, and sound state of both. It is one of Epicurius's fixed maxims, "That life can never be pleasant without virtue*." Vices seize upon men with the violence and rage of furies; but the Christian virtues replenish the breast, which they inhabit, with a heavenly peace and abundant joy, and thereby render it like that of an angel. The slaves of pleasure and carnal affections have within them, even now, an earnest of future torments; so that, in this present life, we may truly apply to them that expression in the Revelation, "They, that worship the beast, have no rest day nor night. There is perpetual peace with the humble, says the most devout A. Kempis; but the proud and the covetous are never at rest †."

If we speak of charity, which is the root and spring of justice, what a lasting pleasure does it diffuse through the soul! "Envy, as the saying is, has no days of festivity ‡:" it enjoys not even its own advantages, while it is tormented with those it sees in the possession of others; but charity is happy, not only in its own enjoyments, but also in those of others, even as if they were its own: nay, it is then most happy in the enjoyment of its own good things, when, by liberality, it makes them the property of others: In short, it is a godlike virtue §.

* Ἀνευ ἀρετῆς οὐκ ἔστιν ἡδέως ζῆν.

† Jugis pax cum humili, superbus autem & avarus nunquam quiescunt.

‡ Invidia festos dies non agit.

§ ἀρετὴ θεοείκελος.

There is nothing more divine in man, "than to wish well to man, and to do good to as many as one possibly can *;" but piety, which worships God in constant prayer, and celebrates him with the highest praises, raises man above himself, and gives him rank among the angels. And contemplation, which is indeed the most genuine and purest pleasure of the human soul, and very summit of felicity, is no where so sublime and enriched, as it will be found to be in true religion, where it may expatiate in a system of divine truths most extensive, clear, and infallibly certain, mysteries that are most profound, and hopes that are the most exalted: and he that can render these subjects familiar to his mind, even on this earth, enjoys a life replete with heavenly pleasure.

I might enlarge greatly on this subject, and add a great many other considerations to those I have already offered; but I shall only further observe, that that sweet virtue of contentment, so effectual for quieting the mind, which philosophy sought for in vain, religion alone has found; and also discovered, that it takes its rise from a firm confidence in the almighty power of Divine Providence. For what is there that can possibly give uneasiness to him, who commits himself entirely to that paternal goodness and wisdom, which he knows to be infinite, and securely devolves the care of all his concerns upon it?

If any of you object, what has been observed before, that we often see good men meet with severe treatment, and also read, that "many are the afflictions of the just[t]:" I answer, do you not also read what immediately follows? "But the Lord delivereth him out of them all[u]." And it would be madness to deny, that this more than compensates the other. But neither are the wicked quite exempted from the

* Omnibus bene velle, & quam plurimis possit benefacere.

[t] Psal. cxxxiv. [u] Ibid.

misfortunes and calamities of life; and when they fall upon them, they have nothing to support them under such pressures, none to extricate or deliver them.

But a true Christian, encouraged by a good conscience, and depending upon the divine favour, bears with patience all these evils, by the efforts of generous love, and unshaken faith: they all seem light to him; he despises what he suffers while he waits with patience for the object of his hope; and, indeed, what either in life or in death, can he be afraid of, "whose life is hid with Christ in God;" and of whom it may be justly said, without exaggeration, "If the world should be crushed and broken to pieces, he would be undaunted, even while the ruins fell upon his head?*"

* Si fractus illabatur orbis
Impavidum ferient ruinæ. HOR.

LECTURE XX.

Of our HAPPINESS, *particularly that it lies in* GOD, *who alone can direct us to the true way of attaining to it; that this way he has discovered in the Sacred Scriptures, the divine authority whereof is asserted and illustrated.*

THESE two expressions, "That there is a beginning, and that there is also an end*;" convey matters great in themselves, and which ought to be considered as of vast importance to us. It is absolutely necessary that there should be some one principle of all things; and by an equal degree of necessity, this principle must be, of all others, the greatest and the best. It is also necessary that he, who gave being to all things, must have proposed to himself some end to be attained by the production and disposal of them: but as the end of the best of all agents must itself also be the highest and the best, this end can be no other than himself. And the reasonings of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, concerning the oath of God, may also be applied to this case: "As he had no greater to swear by, says the apostle, he swore by himself." In like manner, as he had no greater or better end to propose, he proposed himself. "He hath made all things for himself," says the author of the book of Proverbs, "even the wicked for the day of evil[m]." And the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, gives us a lively description of that incomparable circle, the most compleat of all figures: "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen[n]."

* ἐστὶν ἄρα τὶς ἀρχὴ, καὶ ἐστὶν ἆρα τὶ τέλος.

[m] Prov. xvi. 4. [n] Rom. x. 36.

Now man, the ornament and master-piece of all the visible creation, by extraordinary art, and in a method peculiar to himself, returns to his first original, and has his Creator not only for the principle of his being, and of his well-being, but also for his end. Thus, by a wonderful instance of wisdom and goodness, God has so connected his own glory with our happiness, that we cannot properly intend or desire the one, but the other must follow of course, and our felicity is at last resolved into his eternal glory. The other works of God serve to promote his honour; but man, by rational knowledge and will, offers himself, and all that he has, as a sacrifice to his Creator. From his knowledge of him he is induced to love him; and in consequence of his love, he attains at last to the enjoyment of him. And it is the wisdom, as well as the happiness of man, to propose to himself, as the scope and ultimate end of his life, that very thing which his exalted Creator had proposed before.

But, that we may proceed gradually in our speculations upon this subject, we must first conclude, that there is a proper end intended for man; that this end is suited to his nature, and perfectly accommodated to all his wants and desires, that so the principal part of this wonderful fabric may not be quite irregular, and labour under a manifest imperfection.

Nor can there be a more important speculation, nor one more worthy of man, than that which concerns his own end, and that good which is fully and perfectly suited to his circumstances. Chance or fortune must, of necessity, have a great influence in our life, when we live at random; we must, therefore, if we be wise, or rather that we may be wise, propose to ourselves an end, to which all our actions ought to have a reference, and by which, as a certain fixed star, we are to direct our course. But it is surprising to observe, how much all the wisest men among the heathens were per-

plexed in their enquiries after this end, and into how many different opinions they were divided about it. Of this, however, we have spoken at greater length in another place.

Now, to be brief, it is necessary, that this good, or end, should be, "perfectly suitable, not easily taken away, nay, such as we can, by no means, be deprived of; and finally, it must consist of such things as have a particular relation to the soul, and not of external enjoyments *." Whence "slavish and brutal pleasures †," vain and perishing honours and riches, which only serve to support and promote the former, are, in this enquiry, justly, and without the least hesitation, hissed off the stage by all sound philosophers; who, with great unanimity, acknowledge, that our felicity consists solely, or at least principally, in virtue. But your favourite philosopher Aristotle, and the Peripatetics, who are his followers, seem to doubt, whether virtue alone be sufficient for this purpose, and not to be very consistent with themselves. The Stoics, who proceeded with greater courage, and acted more like men, affirmed, that virtue was fully sufficient for this purpose, without the helps and supplements required by the former. And that, while they bestowed such high praises on virtue, they might not seem to have quite forgotten God, they not only said, that virtue was *something divine*, in which they were joined by Aristotle, but also concluded, that their wise man did all things "with a direct reference to God ‡." It was also a general maxim with the followers of Plato, "That the end of man is to be, as far as is possible, made like unto God §." And Plato himself, in his second book of Laws, and in his Phædo, asserts, that man's chief good is the *knowledge of the truth*: yet, as this knowledge

* Τελεῖον, καὶ αὐταρκὲς, καὶ δυσαφάιρετον, imo ἀναφαίρετον, καὶ των περὶ ψυχῆς, καὶ ἃ των ἔκτ⊙.

† ἀνδραποδώδεις καὶ θηριώδεις ἡδοναι.

‡ Μετ' ἀναφορᾶς εἰς τον Θεὸν.

§ Τέλ⊙ ἀνθρώπυ ὁμοιώσις Θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δύνατον.

is not perfect in the present life, he is of opinion, that it can scarcely be said of any man, that he is happy here below; but there is hope to be entertained concerning the dead, provided they are purified before they leave the world. But there are two things particularly, with regard to this question, which our religion, and most precious faith, teaches with incomparably greater fulness and evidence, than all the schools and books of the philosophers.

1. That our felicity is not to terminate in ourselves, but in God. "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord[x]: and, the pure in heart shall see God[y]." "To seek God, says St. Augustine, is to desire happiness, and to find him is that happiness*."

2. That our happiness is not confined within the limits of this short life, nor does it end with it: on the contrary, it is scarce begun in this world; but when the present life comes to a period, then this happiness is compleated and becomes eternal. Our life on this earth, therefore, is only so far happy as it has a resemblance to that we shall enjoy in heaven, and becomes, as it were, an earnest of it: that is, when it is employed in pure and sincere piety, in obedience to the will of God, and an ambition to promote his glory, till we arrive at that happy state, where our hunger and thirst shall be abundantly satisfied, and yet our appetites never cloyed.

For it is evident, that man, in this life, becomes so much the more perfect and happy, in proportion as he has his mind and affections more thoroughly conformed to the pattern of that most blessed and perfect life: and this is indeed the great ambition of a true Christian; this is his study, which he ceases not to pursue with ardour day and night: nor does he let so much as one day pass without copying some lines of that perfect pattern; and the

[x] Psal. cxii. 1. [y] Matth. v. 8.

* Secutio Dei appetitus beatitatis, consecutio beatitas.

more he advances in purity of mind, the greater progress he makes in the knowledge and contemplation of divine things.

But who will instruct us with regard to the means of reaching this blessed mark? Who will shew us how we may attain this conformity to God, and most effectually promote his honour and glory, so that at last we may come to the enjoyment of him in that endless life, and be for ever satisfied with the beatific vision of him? What faithful guide shall we find to direct us in this way? Surely he himself must be our leader; there is no other besides him, that can answer our purpose. It is he alone that acquaints us with his own nature, as far as it is necessery for us to know it; and he alone that directs us to the way wherein he chuses to be worshipped. "God cannot be known but by his own revelation of himself*." When he is pleased to wrap himself up in a cloud, neither man, in his original integrity, nay, nor even the angels, can know or investigate his nature or his intentions. We are indeed acquainted in the sacred records, "That the heavens declare the glory of God[1]:" and this, to be sure, is very true in certain respects, but they do by no means declare the hidden mysteries of the Creator, nor his intentions, and the manner of that worship and service he requires from his reasonable creatures. And therefore the Psalmist, having begun the psalm with the voice and declaration of the heavens, immediately after mentions another light much clearer than the sun himself, and a volume or book more perfect than the language of all the spheres. Nothing is more certain, than that the doctrine, which leads us to God, must take its rise from him; for by no art whatever can the waters be made to rise higher than their fountain. It was therefore absolutely necessary, for the purpose I have men-

* Non potest Deus, nisi de Deo intelligi.

[1] Psal. xix. 1.

tioned, that some revelation concerning God, should be made to mankind by himself; and, accordingly, he did reveal himself to them from the beginning; and these revelations the father of lies mimicked by those delusions of his, that were published by the heathen oracles. The divine Wisdom, in revealing himself to mankind, has thought proper, at different periods of time, to make use of different methods and ways, or, according to that of the epistle to the Hebrews, "at sundry times, and in divers manners*;" but at last it seemed good to him, that this sacred doctrine should be committed to writing, that with the greater certainty and purity it might be handed down to succeeding ages. If we consider his absolute power, it would certainly have been as easy for him to have preserved this doctrine pure and entire, without committing it to writing; but, for the most part, he has been pleased to make use of means naturally suited and adapted to his purposes, and disposes all things, so as effectually to secure his ends, yet in an easy natural manner suited to our capacities and conceptions of things.

If any one would prove, that these books which we receive as such, are in fact the repositories of this sacred and celestial doctrine, the most proper method he could take would be, first, to shew, that the sacred history and doctrines, contained in them, are true; and then, from their own testimony, conclude them divine.

For the truth of our religion being once well established, it is, to be sure, a most just postulatum, and such as ought not to be denied to any sect of men, that, in this instance, the testimony of the Christian church should be believed, when it points out the books wherein the sum and substance of that religion are originally and authentically deposited†.

* Πολυμέρως καὶ πολυτρόπως.

† ἀυθεντικῶς.

The truth of the sacred history being once granted, the divinity of the doctrine will naturally follow of course; as the history mentions so many and so great miracles that were wrought in confirmation of the doctrine; those particularly that were performed in proof of the Old Testament by Moses, the servant of God, by whose ministry the law was given to the Jews; and those that were wrought in confirmation of the New by Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and author of the Evangelic law; as also those that were wrought by his servants the apostles, and other Christians: and absolutely to deny the force of all these, would be an instance of impudence and obstinacy so great, that the keenest enemies of the Christian name of old did not venture upon it. But the scriptures have two great evidences of their divinity, their own internal character, and that external testimony. There are two things which principally prove their external character.

1st. The incomparable sublimity and purity of the doctrine they contain: for in vain will you look for such profound mysteries, and such pure and holy precepts, any where else.

2. The inimitable and evidently divine majesty of the stile, attended, at the same time, with a surprising and wonderful simplicity. Their voice is not the voice of man; but the whole of them, notwithstanding their great extent, sounds something more grand than can be expected from the mouths of mortal men. Nor ought we to pass over that divine efficacy which the scriptures have, not only to move the minds of men, but also by a divine operation *, to change them into something quite different from what they were before; according to that of Lactantius, "Give me a fierce, cruel, and passionate man, with a few of the words of God I will make him as meek as a lamb, &c. †." And the

* Θειῳ μεταμορφώσει.

† Da mihi ferum, &c. ut supra.

external testimony already mentioned, has, to be sure, as much weight as any thing of that kind can possibly have. Who would deny to the regular succession of the Catholic church, the credit of a witness? Who, on the other hand, would claim the authority of a judge and arbitrator? It would be quite silly to ascribe to the church a decisive power, as if, when a book were first presented to it, or brought out of any place, where it had been long concealed, it could immediately pronounce whether that book was of divine authority or not. The church is only a witness with regard to these books we acknowledge, and its testimony extends no further than that they were received, in the first ages of Christianity, as sacred and divinely inspired, and as such handed down from age to age, to the church that now is; and he that would venture to discredit this testimony, must have a heart of lead and a face of brass.

There is no occasion to dispute so fiercely about the inward testimony of the Holy Ghost: for I am persuaded that those who talk about it, understand nothing more by it, than that the Holy Spirit produces, in the hearts of men, that faith whereby they chearfully and sincerely receive these books, and the doctrine contained in them, as divine; because such a faith either includes, in the very notion of it, or at least is necessarily connected with a religious frame of mind, and a sincere disposition to universal obedience. "And he that believeth, as the apostle John expresseth it, has this testimony in himself[q]," though he cannot convey, or transfer it to others. Now, to assert the necessity of such an internal testimony, is nothing more than to say, that whatever evidence the scripture may have in itself, or from other considerations, yet the divine faith of this truth must be from above. And he that would deny this, would thereby plainly discover, that he was an entire

[q] 1 John v. 10.

stranger to that faith itself. "The scripture," says Thomas à Kempis, "must surely be believed and understood, by means of the same spirit, by whom it was at first delivered *." And, as St. Augustine expresses it, "the only effectual teacher is he, who has his chair in heaven, and yet instructs the hearts of men on this earth †." The same divine spirit plants faith in the mind, together with the proper intelligence of divine things, and daily augments and improves these dispositions. This great gift of the spirit is, therefore, to be sought by fervent and constant prayer; and the Son of God, who is truth itself, has assured us, that his most bountiful Father will give it to those that ask him. Aristotle has told us, "That divine inspiration is to be sought by sacrifices ‡." And it is no less true, "that the faith and understanding of things revealed by divine inspiration are to be sought by prayer §." Varro tells us, that he wrote first of human, and then of divine institutions, because societies of men existed first, and the latter were instituted by them. True religion, on the contrary, instead of being instituted by any city or society on earth, hath instituted a city altogether heavenly and divine, and is itself inspired by God, who is the giver of eternal life to all that worship him in sincerity ‖.

It is truly surprising to observe, how differently this religion was of old received among men, and what different entertainment it meets with even to this day, though the doctrine has been always the same: though it is still enforced by the same arguments, and has the same difficulties and prejudices to struggle with. When the divine apostle preached in the Areopagus at Athens, a great many mocked

* Eodem certe spiritu et credenda, et intelligenda sacra scriptura, quo tradita est.

† Qui cathedram habet in cælo, corda docet in terris.

‡ Τὸ θεόπνευστον τᾶις θυσίαις ζητητεον.

§ Την των θεοπνευστων πίστιν κ᾽ σύνεσι ἰυχᾶις ζητητεον.

‖ St. Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. vi. c. 3.

and ridiculed him: others said, "We will hear thee again of this matter; but certain men clave unto him and believed [m]." And that we may not think this faith, in those who believed, was owing to their uncommon penetration or sagacity on the one hand, or to their weakness and simplicity on the other, of the two mentioned in scripture, that believed on this occasion, the one was a philosopher, and the other a woman. Now, though, without doubt, human liberty is to be allowed its due weight in this matter; yet we cannot help acknowledging, that *a certain influence or energy* * seems to discover itself here.

The basis of religion is faith; just apprehensions or *right notions* † of God, according to Epictetus. St. Ignatius says, "Faith is the beginning of life, and love the end of it ‡:" and the words of the apostle are, "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" so that the giving of a law to man, and the enforcing it with the motives of rewards and punishments, is not inconsistent with the filial and disinterested obedience of a rational creature, even in a state of innocence.

All true and lively faith begets love; and thus that heavenly light is the vehicle of heat: and as, by this means, true faith has a tendency to the practice of disobedience, so all true obedience depends upon faith, and flows from it; but it also proceeds from love, because faith first produces love, and then works by it. All knowledge of mysteries is vain, and of no value; unless it have an influence upon the affections, and thereby upon the whole conduct of life. The luminaries of heaven are placed

[m] Acts xvii. 32, 34.

* Θεῖαν τινὰ μοῖραν vel ἐνεργειαν.

† ὀρθαὶ ὑπολήψεις.

‡ ἀρχὴ ζωῆς πίστις, τέλος δε ἀγαπή

on high; but they are so placed, that they may shine, and perform their periods, for the benefit of this earth[r].

1. We must believe, that God is: this truth is written in capital letters on every page of the sacred books of scripture: for all things that are therein delivered by God, and concerning him, confirm this, and take it for a primary and undoubted principle. But these sacred books acknowledge another universal evidence of this leading truth, and an evidence quite distinct from theirs, to which they refer all, even the most obstinate unbelievers, and those that are entirely ignorant of this celestial doctrine, for full conviction[s].

As it is quite plain, that the testimony of the written word will have little or no influence upon men, who have not received the least tincture of divine faith; should any person, disputing with them, reason after this manner, there is a God, because this is asserted in the sacred scriptures, and their testimony must, by all means, be believed, because they are the word of God: an argument of this kind, to be sure, would have no other effect, but to expose the person that urged it to the ridicule of Atheists and unbelievers; because it evidently begs the question, and runs into a vicious circle. He, therefore, thut would bring over such persons to the faith, must reason after a quite different manner. But let him, on the other hand, who once accepts these books, with the submission due to their real dignity, and divine authenticity, receive light and edification from them on every article of faith, and with regard to the whole system of religion in general: let him also, in congratulation to their exalted Author, cry out, "With thee, O Lord, is the fountain of life: and in thy light we shall see light[t]." And let him that desires to be, not only a nominal proficient in theology,

[r] Gen. i. 17. [s] Rom. i. 20. [t] Psal. xxvi. 9.

but a real lover of God, and willing to be taught by him *, resolve within himself, above all things, to make this sacred volume his constant study, mixing his reading with frequent and fervent prayer; for if this be omitted, his labour will be altogether in vain, supposing him to be ever so well versed, not only in these books, but also to have all the advantages that can be had from the knowledge of languages, and the assistance of commentators and interpreters. Different men have different views in reading this book; as in the same field the ox looks for grass, the hound for a hare, and the stork for a lizard. Some, fond of critical remarks, pick up nothing but little stones and shells. Others run in pursuit of sublime mysteries, giving themselves but very little trouble about the precepts and instructions, that are clear and evident; and these plunge themselves into a pit, that has no bottom. But the genuine disciples of this true wisdom are those, who make it their daily employment to purify their hearts by the water of those fountains, and reduce their whole lives to a conformity with this heavenly doctrine. They desire not to know these things only, that they may have the reputation of knowledge, or to be distinguished in the world; but that their souls may be healed, and their steps directed, so that they may be led through the paths of righteousness, to the glorious felicity which is set before them.

The sum of all is, that our felicity lies solely and entirely in that blessed God, who is also the fountain and source of our being; that the only means of our union with him is true religion; and this, again, consists in our entertaining just notions of God, worshipping him acceptably, and endeavouring after a constant and unwearied obedience to all his commands, according to that most pure

* Φιλόθεος καὶ θεοδίδακτος.

and perfect rule laid down in these divine books, which we profess to receive as such. Let us, therefore, have constantly fixed in our minds these words of the Psalmist, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, that walk in the way of the Lord. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O! that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes[n]."

[n] Psal. cxix. 1, 4, 5.

LECTURE XXI.

Of the DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

OF all the maxims that are naturally written on the heart of man, there is none more certain or more universally known, than THAT GOD IS; concerning which I have given a dissertation some time ago. But of all the secrets and hidden things of nature, which have been the subject of human study and inquiry, there is nothing, by a prodigious odds, so difficult or unsearchable, as to know WHAT HE IS. The saying of St. Augustine concerning time, is well known in the schools; with how much greater truth might it be said of him, who is more ancient than time, "and who bid time flow from the beginning*? That he hath made darkness his hiding-place, and amidst that darkness dwells in light inaccessible[g]," which, to our eyes, is to be sure more dark than darkness itself! O the divine darkness! says a great man†; and another most acutely, "If you divide or cut asunder this darkness, who will shine forth‡?" When, therefore, we are to speak of him, let us always call to remembrance the admonition, which bids us "speak with reverence and fear§." For what can we say that is worthy of him, since man, when he speaks of God, is but a blind person describing light? Yet, blind as we are, there is one thing we may, with great truth, say of

* —— Qui tempus ab ævo
Ire jubet. BOETH. Cons. Phil. lib. iii. met. 9.

[g] Psalm xviii. 11.

† Ω τὸ θεῖον σκότος.

‡ ἂν τό σκότος τέμνῃ τὶς ἀναστρᾶπτεται.

§ Δαλεῖ μεν εν φόβῳ.

that glorious light, and let us frequently repeat it; O when will that blessed day shine forth, which shall deliver the soul from those thick integuments of flesh, that, like scales on the eye, obstruct its sight, and shall introduce it into a more full and open view of that primitive eternal light? Perhaps the properest answer we could give to the question, What is God? would be to observe a most profound silence: or, if we should think proper to give any answer, it ought to be something next to this absolute silence; viz. GOD IS; which gives us a higher and better idea of him, than any thing we can either express or conceive.

Theological writers mention three methods, whereby men come to some kind of knowledge of God themselves, and communicate that knowledge to others, viz. the way of *negation*, the way of *causation*, and the way of *eminence:* yet the very terms, that are used to express these ways, shew what a faint knowledge of the invisible Being is to be attained by them; so that the two last may be justly reduced to the first, and all our knowledge of this kind called negative. For to pretend to give any explanation of the Divine Essence, as distinct from what we call his attributes, would be a refinement so absurd, that, under the appearance of more accurate knowledge, it would betray our ignorance the more: and so unaccountable would it be to attempt any such thing, with regard to the unsearchable majesty of God, that possibly the most towering and exalted genius on earth ought frankly to acknowledge, that we know neither our own essence, nor that of any other creature, even the meanest and most contemptible. Though in the schools they distinguish the divine attributes or excellencies, and that by no means improperly, into communicable and incommunicable; yet we ought so to guard this distinction, as always to remember, that those which are called communicable, when applied to God, are not only to be understood, in a manner incommunicable, and quite pecu-

liar to himself; but also, that in him they are, in reality, infinitely different from those virtues; or rather, in a matter where the disparity of the subjects is so very great, those shadows of virtues, that go under the same name, either in men or angels; for it is not only true, that all things, in the infinite and eternal being, are infinite and eternal, but they are also, though in a manner quite inexpressible, himself. He is good without quality, great without quantity, &c. He is good in such a sense, as to be called by the Evangelist, the only good being[g]. He is also the only wise being; "To the only wise God," saith the Apostle. And the same Apostle tells us, in another place, "That he only hath immortality," that is, from his own nature, and not from the will or disposition of another*." "If we are considered as joined to, or united with God," says an antient writer of great note, "we have a being, we live, and in some sort are wise; but if we are compared with God, we have no wisdom at all, nor do we live, or so much as have any existence †." All other things were by him brought out of nothing, in consequence of a free act of his will by means of his infinite power; so that they may be justly called mere contingencies, and he is the only necessarily existent being. Nay, he is the only *really existent being*. τὸ ὄντως ὄν; or, as Plotinus expresses it, τὸ ὑπερόντως ὄν. Thus also the Septuagint speaks of Him, as the only existent being ‡, and so also does the heathen poet §. This is likewise implied in the exalted name Jehovah, which expresses his being, and that he has it from himself; but what that being is, or wherein its essence, so to speak, consists, it does not say; nor, if it did, could we at all

[g] Matth. xix. 17.

* ἐξ οἰκείας φύσεως ἀλλ' ἐξ ἑτέρου βουλήσεως.

† Deo si conjungimur, sumus, vivimus, sapimus: Deo si comparamur, nec sapimus omnino, nec vivimus, imo nec sumus. Greg. Mag. Mor.

‡ ὁ ὤν. § οὐδὲ τὶς ἰσόθ' ἕτερος χωρὶς μεγάλου βασιλῆος.

conceive it. Nay, so far is that name from discovering what his being is, that it plainly insinuates, that his existence is hid, and covered with a vail. *I am who I am; or, I am what I am*[h]. As if he had said, I myself know what I am, but you neither know, nor can know it; and if I should declare wherein my being consists, you could not conceive it. He has, however, manifested in his works, and in his word, what it is our interest to know, "That he is the Lord God, merciful and gracious, abundant in goodness and truth."

We call him a most pure spirit, and mean to say, that he is of a nature entirely incorporeal; yet this word, in the Greek, Hebrew, and all other languages, according to its primitive and natural signification, conveys no other idea, than that of a *gentle gale*, or wind, which every one knows to be a body, though rarified to a very great degree; so that, when we speak of that infinite purity, all words fail us; and even, when we think of it, all the refinements of the acutest understanding are quite at a stand, and become entirely useless. It is, in every respect, as necessary to acknowledge his eternity, as his being; provided, that, when we mention the term God, we mean by it the first being, supposing that expression to include also his self-existence. This idea of a first and eternal being is again inseparably connected with an infinite degree of all possible perfection, together with immutability, and absolute perseverance therein. But all these are treated of, at great length, in Theological books, whereof you have a very large collection.

In like manner, if we suppose God to be the first of all beings, we must, unavoidably, therefrom, conclude his unity: as to the ineffable Trinity subsisting in this Unity, a mystery discovered only by the sacred Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, where it is more clearly revealed than in the Old, let others boldly pry into it, if they please,

[h] Exod. iii. 14.

while we receive it with an humble faith, and think it sufficient for us to admire and adore.

The other Attributes, that use to be mentioned on this subject, may be supposed to be perfectly comprehended under the following three, viz. *power*, *wisdom*, and *goodness:* for *holiness*, *justice*, *mercy*, *infinite bounty*, &c. may be, with great propriety, ranked under the general term of *goodness*.

But rather than insist upon metaphysical speculations, let us, while we walk daily in these pleasant fields, be constantly culling fresh and never fading flowers. When the Psalmist cries out, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and of his greatness there is no end[1]; he wanted to shew, saith St. Augustine, how great he is; but how can this be done? Though he repeated, great, great, the whole day, it would have been to little purpose, for he must have ended at last, because the day would have ended; but his greatness was before the beginning of days, and will reach beyond the end of time†." The poet expresses himself admirably well, "I will praise thee, O blessed God, with my voice, I will praise thee, also, with silence. For thou, O inexpressible Father, who can'st never be known, understandest the silence of the mind, as well as any words or expressions‡."

[1] Psalm cxlv. 3.

† Volebat dicere quam magnus sit, sed hoc qui fieri potest? Etsi tota die magnum diceret, parum esset, finiret enim aliquando, quia, finiretur dies, magnitudo autem illius ante dies, & ultra dies.

‡ Ὑμνῶ σε μάκαρ,
Καὶ διὰ Φωνᾶς.
Ὑμνῶ σε μάκαρ,
Καὶ διὰ σιγᾶς.
Ὅσα γαρ φωνᾶς
Τόσα καὶ σιγᾶς,
Ἄπειρε νοερᾶς.
Πάτερ ἄγνωστε,
Πάτερ ἄῤῥητε. Syn. hymno. 4to.

LECTURE XXII.

How to regulate Life according to the Rules of RELIGION.

I HAVE now, at different times, addressed myself to you upon several subjects of great importance, and of the utmost necessity; though, what I have hitherto said, was only designed as a preface, or introduction, to what I further proposed; but to attempt to prosecute this design, at the very end of the year, would be quite improper, and to little or no purpose; I shall, therefore, altogether forbear entering upon it, and, for this time, lay before you a few advices, which may be useful, not only in order to employ, to greater advantage, the months of vacation, that are now at hand, but also the better to regulate your whole lives.

And my first advice shall be, to avoid too much sleep, which wastes the morning hours, that are most proper for study, as well as for the exercises of religion; and stupifies and enervates the strength of body and mind. I remember, that the famous abbot of Clairevaux*, when he found the friars sleeping immoderately, used to say, "That they slept like the secular clergy†." And, though we do not admit of the severe rules to which the monks subjected themselves, we must at least allow, that the measure and degree of sleep, and other bodily refreshments, suitable for a young man, devoted to study and devotion, is very far different from that excess, in which the common sort of mankind indulge themselves.

* St. Bernard. † Seculariter dormire.

Another advice, which is akin to, and nearly connected with, the former, shall be, to observe *temperance* in eating and drinking: for moderation in sleeping generally follows sobriety in eating, and other sensual gratifications; but that thick cloud of vapours, that arises from a full stomach, must of necessity overwhelm all the animal spirits, and keep them long locked up in an indolent inactive state. Therefore the Greeks, not without reason, express these two duties, *to be sober, and to be watchful,* indifferently by the same term. And the Apostle Peter, that he might make his connection more evident, uses, indeed, two words for this purpose; but exhorts to these duties, as closely connected together, or rather, as if they were, in some respect, but one, *Be sober, be vigilant* *. And, in the same Epistle, having substituted another word for sobriety, he expresses watchfulness by the same word he had put for sobriety in the other place, *Be sober* and *watch* †. Both these dispositions are so applied to the mind, as to include a sober and watchful state of the body and senses; as this is exceeding useful, nay quite necessary, in order to a correspondent frame of the mind: and that disposition, both of body and mind, not only subservient, but also necessary to piety and constancy in prayer; "Be sober and watch unto prayer ‡."

When the body is reduced to its lightest and most active state, still, as it is corruptible, it is, to be sure, a burthen to the mind; how much more must it be so, when it is depressed with an immoderate load of meat and drink; and, in consequence of this, of sleep? Nor can the mind rouse itself, or use the wings of contemplation and prayer with freedom, when it is overpowered with so heavy a load: nay, neither can it make any remarkable progress in the

* Νήψατε, γρηγορήσατε.

† Σωφρονήσατε, καὶ νήψατε. 1 Pet. iv. 7.

‡ εἰς τας προσευχὰς.

study of human literature, but will move slowly, and embarrassed, be at a stand, like a wheel-carriage in deep clay. The Greeks, very justly, expressed the virtue, we are now recommending, by the term σωφροσυνη, it being, as your favourite philosopher * observes in his Ethicks, the great preservative of the mind. He is certainly a very great enemy to his own understanding that lives high, and indulges himself in luxury. "A fat belly is seldom accompanied with an acute understanding †." Nor is it my intention in this, only to warn you against drunkenness and luxury; I would willingly hope, that such an advice would be superfluous to you: but, in this conflict, I would willingly carry you to such a pitch of victory, that, at your ordinary and least delicious meals, that you would always stop some degrees within the bounds, to which your appetite would carry you. Consider "that, as Cato said, the belly has no ears ‡," but it has a mouth, into which a bridle must be put, and, therefore, I address not myself to it, but to the directing mind, that is set over it, which, for that reason, ought to govern the body, with all its senses, and curb them at its pleasure. St. Bernard's words are admirable to this purpose, "A prudent mind, devoted to God, ought so to act in its body, as the master of a family in his own house. He ought not to suffer his flesh to be, as Solomon expresses it, like a brawling woman, nor any carnal appetite to act like a rebellious servant; but to enure them to obedience and patience. He must not have his senses for his guides, but bring them into subjection and subserviency to reason and religion. He must, by all means, have his house and family so ordered, and well disciplined, that he can say to one, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh; and, to his servant the body, Do this, and it doeth what it is bid, without mur-

* Aristotle.

† Παχεῖα γαστὴρ λεπτὸν οὐ τίκτει νόον.

‡ Ventrem non habere aures.

muring. The body must also be treated with a little hardship, that it may not be disobedient to the mind*." "For he, saith Solomon, that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child, shall have him become a *rebellious* son at last[l]." This is what I would have you aspire to, a conquest over your flesh, and all its lusts; for they carry on a deadly war against your souls; and their desires are then most to be resisted, when they flatter most. What an unhappy and dishonourable inversion of nature it is, when the flesh commands, and the mind is in subjection! When the flesh, which is vile, gross, earthly, and soon to be the food of worms, governs "the soul, that is the breath of God, &c.†"

Another thing I would have you beware of, is *immoderate speech.* The evils of the tongue are many; but the shortest way to find a remedy for them all, is to study silence, and avoid, as the poet expresses it, "excessive prating, and a vast desire of speaking‡."

"He is a perfect man, as the Apostle James expresses it, who offends not in word[m];" and therefore, doubtless, he that speaks least, offends in this respect more rarely. "But in the multitude of words, as the wise man observes, there wants not sin[n]." To speak much, and also to the purpose, seldom falls

* Sic prudens & Deo decatus animus habere se debet in corpore suo, sicut pater familias in domo sua. Non habeat, sicut Solomon dicit, mulierem litigiosam carnem suam, nec ullum appetitum carnis ut servum rebellem, sed ad obedientiam & patientiam assuefactum. Habeat sensus suos non duces, sed rationi & religioni servientes & sequaces; habeat omnem omnino domum vel familiam suam sic ordinatam, & disciplinæ subditam, ut dicat huic vade, & vadat, & alii, veni, & veniat, & servo corpori, facito hoc, & sine murmure fiat quod jubetur, & paulo certe durius tractandum est corpus, ne animo male pareat.

[l] Prov. xxix. 21.

† Ψυχη δ' ἐστιν ἀήμα θεῦ, &c.

‡ Improba garrulitas, studiumq; immane loquendi.

[m] James iii. 2. [n] Prov. x. 19.

to the share of one man*. Now, that we may avoid loquacity, we must love solitude, and render it familiar; that so every one may have an opportunity to speak much to himself, and little to other people. "We must, to be sure, says á Kempis, be in charity with all men; but it is not expedient to be familiar with every one†." General, and indiscriminate conversation with every one we meet, is a mean and silly thing. Even, when we promise ourselves comfort and satisfaction, from free conversation, we often return from such interviews with uneasiness; or, at least, have spoken and heard such things, as, upon serious reflection, may justly give us concern. But, if we would secure our tongues and senses, or keep safe our hearts, and all the issues of life, we must be frequent at prayer, in the morning, at noon, and at night, or oftener throughout the day, and continually walk, as in the presence of God; always remembering, that he observes not only our words and actions, but also takes notice of our most secret thoughts. This is the sum and substance of true piety: for he, who is always sensible, that that pure and all-seeing eye is continually upon him, will never venture to sin, with set purpose, or full consent of mind. This sense of the divine presense, would certainly make our life, on this earth, like that of the angels; for, according to our Lord's expression, it is their peculiar advantage, "continually to behold the face of our Father, who is in heaven." By this means Joseph escaped the snares laid for him by his imperious mistress; and, as if he had thrown water upon it, extinguished that fiery dart with this seasonable reflection, "Shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ‡." He might have escaped

* Χωρὶς τὸ τ' εἴπειν πόλλα καὶ τὰ καίρια.

† Charitas certe habenda est erga omnes, sed familiaritas non expedit.

‡ Gen. xxxix. 9.

the eyes of men, but he stood in awe of that invisible eye, from which nothing can be hid. We read of a good man of old, who got the better of a temptation, of the same kind, by the same serious consideration; for, being carried from one chamber to another, by the woman that tempted him, he still demanded a place of greater secresy, till having brought him to the most retired place of the whole house, here, said she, no person will find us out, no eye can see us. To this he answered, will no eye see? Will not that of God perceive us? By which saying, he himself escaped the snare, and, by the influence of divine grace, brought the sinful woman to repentance. But now,

Let us pray.

PRAISE waits for thee, O Lord, in Zion; and to be employed in paying thee that tribute, is a becoming and pleasant exercise: it is due to thee from all the works of thy hands, but particularly proper from thy saints and celestial spirits. Elevate, O Lord, our minds, that they may not grovel on the earth, and plunge themselves in the mire; but, being carried upwards, may taste the pleasures of thy house, that exalted house of thine, the inhabitants whereof are continually singing thy praises. Their praises add nothing to thee, but they themselves are perfectly happy therein. While they behold thy boundless goodness, without any vail, admire thy uncreated beauty, and celebrate the praises thereof throughout all ages. Grant us, that we may walk in the paths of holiness, and, according to our measure, exalt thy name, even on this earth, until we also be translated into the glorious assembly of those who serve thee in thy higher house.

Remember thy goodness and thy covenant to thy church militant upon this earth, and exposed to dangers amidst so many enemies: yet we believe,

that, notwithstanding all these dangers, it will be safe at last: it may be distressed, and plunged in the waters, but it cannot be quite overwhelmed, or finally perish. Pour out thy blessing upon this our nation, our city, and university: we depend upon thee, O Father, without whose hand we should not have been, and without whose favour we can never be happy. Inspire our hearts with gladness, thou, who alone art the fountain of solid, pure, and permanent joy, and lead us, by the paths of righteousness and grace, to the rest and light of glory, for the sake of thy Son, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ; Amen.

LECTURE XXIII.

Of PURITY. *of* LIFE.

IN every act of religious worship, what a great advantage would it be, to remember that saying of our great Master, which nobody is altogether ignorant of, and yet scarce any know as they ought, "That God, whom *we worship*, is a spirit, and therefore to be worshipped in spirit and in truth[a]." He is a spirit, a most pure spirit, and the father of spirits: he is truth, primitive truth, and the most pure fountain of all truth: "But we all have erred in heart[*]." We are indeed spirits, but spirits immersed in flesh; nay, as it were, converted into flesh, and, the light of truth being extinguished within us, quite involved in the darkness of error: and, what still sets us in greater opposition to the truth, every thing about us is false and delusive; "There is no soundness †." How improper, therefore, are we, who are *deceitful* and *carnal* ‡, to worship that spirit of supreme truth? Though we pray, and fast often, yet all our sacrifices, as they are polluted by the impure hands wherewith we offer them, must be offensive, and unacceptable to God; and the more they are multiplied, the more the pure and spotless Deity must complain of them, as the grievance is thereby enhanced. Thus, by his prophet, he complained of his people of old: "Your new moons, saith he, and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth: they are a trouble to me; I am weary to bear them: therefore, when you spread forth your hands, I will

[a] John iv. 24.

[*] ἡμεῖς δὲ πάλλοι καρδία πλανώμενοι. † οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς.

‡ Σάρκινοι καὶ ψευσαι.

hide mine eyes from you, and, as it were, turn my back upon you with disdain: but, if you will wash you, and make you clean, then come, and let us reason together[h]:" as if he had said, then let us converse together, and if there be any difference between us, let us talk over the matter, and settle it in a friendly manner, that our complaints may be turned into mutual embraces, and all your sins being freely and fully forgiven, you may be restored to perfect innocence: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be redder than crimson, they shall be whiter than wool: wash yourselves, and I will also wash you, and most completely wipe away all your stains."

But that we may be the better provided for this useful, and altogether necessary exercise of cleansing our hearts and ways, and apply to it with the greater vigour, let us dwell a little upon that sacred expression in the Psalms, "Wherewith shall a young man purify his way?" The answer is, "By taking heed thereto according to thy word[i]." In this question, several things offer themselves to our observation.

1. That, *without controversy* *, purity of life, or conversation, is a most beautiful and desirable attainment, and that it must, by all means, begin at the very fountain, that is, the heart; whence, as Solomon observes, "proceed the issues of life." In the beginning of the psalm, they are pronounced blessed, "Who are pure, or undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." And, in another place, "Truly God is good to Israel," says the Psalmist, even to such as are of a clean heart[k]." And the words of our Saviour to this purpose are, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God[l]." Nor is the true and genuine beauty of the soul any thing distinct from this purity and sanctity; this is the true image of its great Creator;

[h] Isaiah. i. [i] Psm. cxix. 9. * ὁμολογουμένως,
[k] Psm. lxxiii. 1. [l] Matt. v. 8.

that golden crown, which most unhappily dropt off the head of man, when he fell: so that, with the greatest justice, we may lament and say, "Woe unto us that we have sinned." And it is the general design and intention of all religion, all its mysteries, and all its precepts, that this crown may be again restored, at least, to some part of the human race, and this image again stamped upon them; which image, when fully compleated, and for ever confirmed, will certainly constitute a great part of that happiness, we now hope for, and aspire after. Then, we trust, we shall attain to a more full conformity and resemblance to our beloved head. And, even in this wayfaring state, the more deeply and thoroughly our souls are tinctured with the divine flame of charity, joined with this beautiful purity, the more we resemble him, "who is white and ruddy, and fairer than the sons of men." The Father of mercies has made choice of us, that we may be holy; the Son of God, blessed for ever, has once for all, shed his blood upon earth, in order to purify us, and daily pours out his spirit from heaven upon us, for the same purpose.

But to consider the matter, as it is in itself, where is the person, that does not, even by the force of natural instinct, disdain filth and nastiness, or at least prefer to it purity and neatness of body? Now, as the soul greatly excels the body, so much the more desirable is it, that it should be found in a state of beauty and purity. In like manner, were we to travel a journey, who would not prefer a plain and clean way to one that were rough and dirty? But the way of life, which is not the case in other matters, will be altogether such as you would have it or chuse to make it. With God's assistance, and the influence of his grace, a good man is at pains to purify his own way; but men of an impure and beastly disposition, who delight to wallow in the mire, may always easily obtain their sordid wish. But I hope that you, disdaining such a

brutish indignity, will, in preference to every thing else, give your most serious attention to this enquiry, by what means even young men and boys may purify their way, and, avoiding the dirty paths of the common sort of mankind, walk in such as are more pleasant and agreeable.

2. Observe, that purity is not such an easy matter that it may fall by chance in the way of those that are not in quest of it, but a work of great art and industry. Hence you may also learn, that the way, even of young men or boys*, stand very much in need of this careful attention. It is indeed true, that, in some respect, the reformation of youth is easier, and sooner accomplished, that they are not accustomed to shameful and wicked ways, nor confirmed in sinful habits; but there are other regards, wherein it is more difficult to reduce that period of life to purity, particularly, as it is more strongly impressed with the outward objects that surround it, and easily disposed to imbibe the very worst: the examples and incitements to vice beset youth in greater abundance, and those of that age are more apt to fall in with them.

But, whatever may be said of the easiness or difficulty of reforming youth and childhood, it is evident from this question, which, without doubt, is proposed with wisdom and seriousness, that this matter is within the verge of possibility, and of the number of such as are fit to be attempted. Youth is not so headstrong, nor childhood so foolish, but by proper means they can be bent and formed to virtue and piety. Notwithstanding the *irregular desires* and *forwardness*† of youth, and that madness, whereby they are hurried to forbidden enjoyments, there are words and expressions that can soothe this impetuosity, even such, that by them youth can tame and compose itself, "By attending to it,

* The Hebrew word used in the text, properly signifies a boy.

† ἀχάλινος, ἀδάμαστος.

self and its ways, according to thy word:" that matchless word, which contains all those particular words and expressions, not only that are proper to purify and quiet all the motions and affections of the soul, but also, by a certain divine power, are wonderfully efficacious for that purpose. And what was said of old, concerning Sparta, and its discipline, may be, with much greater truth, asserted of the divine law, and true religion, viz. that it had a surprising power to *tame and subdue mankind**. And this leads us directly to the answer of the question in the text; "By attending thereto, according to thy word."

This is not, therefore, to be done according to our philosophy, but according to thy word, O eternal light, truth, and purity! The philosophy of the heathens, it is true, contains some moral instructions and precepts, that are by no means despicable; but this is only so far as they are agreeable to the word of God, and the divine law, though the philosophers themselves knew nothing of it: but the only perfect system of moral philosophy, that ought to be universally received, is the doctrine of Christianity. This the antient fathers of the primitive church have asserted, and fully proved, to the honour of our religion. But those, who spend their lives in the study of philosophy, can neither reform themselves nor others, if nature be but a little obstinate; and their wisdom, when it does its utmost, rather conceals vices, than eradicates them; but the divine precepts make so great a change upon the man, and, subduing his old habits, so reform him, that you would not know him to be the same. If any of you then aspire to this purity of mind and way, you must, with all possible care, conform yourself, and every thing about you, to the instructions and precepts of this divine word. Nor think this a hard saying; for the study of purity has nothing in it that is unpleasant or disagreeable, unless you think it a grievance to become like unto God.

* Δαμασιμβροτον.

Consider now, young men, nay you, who, without offence, will suffer yourselves to be called boys; consider, I say, wherein consists that true wisdom, which deserves to be pursued with the most earnest study and application, and whereby, if you will, you may far exceed those that are your superiors in years; be ambitious to attain the advantage mentioned in the text, and consequently the condition upon which it depends, for they are inseparably connected together; reconcile your minds to a strict attention to your ways, according to the divine word, and by this means, (which is a very rare attainment) you will reconcile youth, and even childhood, to the purity here recommended: account the divine word and precepts preferable to your daily food; yea, let them be dearer to you than your eyes, and even than life itself.

LECTURE XXIV.

Before the COMMUNION.

IT is the advice of the wise man, "Dwell at home, or with yourself;" and though there are very few that do this, yet it is surprising, that the greatest part of mankind cannot be prevailed upon, at least, to visit themselves sometimes; but according to the saying of the wise Solomon, "The eyes of the fool are in the ends of the earth." It is the peculiar property of the human mind, and its signal privilege, to reflect upon itself; yet we, foolishly neglecting this most valuable gift, conferred upon us by our Creator, and the great ornament of our nature, spend our lives in a brutish thoughtlessness. Were a man, not only to turn in upon himself, carefully to search and examine his own heart, and daily endeavour to improve it more and more in purity, but also to excite others, with whom he conversed, to this laudable practice, by seasonable advice, and affecting exhortations, he would certainly think himself very happy in these exercises. Now, though this expedient is never unseasonable, yet it will be particularly proper, on such an occasion as this, to try it upon yourselves, as you are not ignorant, that it is the great apostolical rule, with respect to all that are called to celebrate the divine mysteries, "that every man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup[e]."

I do not here intend a full explication of this mystery, but only to put you in mind, that, in order to a saving use, and participation thereof, a twofold judgment must, of necessity, be formed;

[e] 1 Cor. xi. 28.

the first with respect to our own souls, and the other to that of the Lord's body. These the apostle considers as closely connected together, and therefore expresses both by the same word. The trial we are to make of ourselves, is indeed expressed by the word δοκιμάζειν, which signifies to prove, or to try; but immediately after he expresses it by judging ourselves, "for if we would judge ourselves, &c. *." whereas, in the preceding verses, he had mentioned the other judgment to be formed, and expressed it by the same word διακρίνειν, which signifies to judge or discern, "Not discerning the Lord's body †." And this is that which renders a vast many unworthy of so great an honour; they approach this heavenly feast, without forming a right judgment either of themselves, or of it: but, that we form a judgment of ourselves, it is necessary, that we first bring ourselves to an impartial trial: and, to be sure, I should much rather advise you to this inward self-examination, and heartily wish I could persuade you to it, than that you should content yourselves with a lifeless trial of your memory, by repeating compositions on this subject.

Consider with yourselves, pray, and think seriously, what madness, what unaccountable folly it is, to trifle with the Majesty of the most high God, and to offer to infinite wisdom the sacrifices of distraction and folly? Shall we, who are but insignificant worms. "thus provoke the *Almighty King* to jealousy ‡," as if we were stronger than he, and of purpose, run our heads, as it were, against that power, the slightest touch whereof would crush us to dust? Do we not know, that the same God, who is an enlivening and saving light to all that worship with humble piety, is nevertheless, a consuming fire to all the impious and profane, who pollute his sacrifices with impure hearts and unclean hands? And that those especially, who have been

* Εἰ γάρ ἑαυτὸς διεκρίνομεν.

† Μὴ διακρίνων το σωμα τυ κυρίυ. ‡ Παραζηλῶν.

employed in his church, and in the divine offices, yet have not experienced his influence as a pure and shining light, will unavoidably feel him as a flaming fire? Let his saints rejoice and exult before God, for this he not only allows, but even commands; yet let even those of them, who have made the greatest advances in holiness, remember, that his holy and spiritual joy is to be joined with holy fear and trembling: nay, the greater progress they have made in holiness, the more deeply will they feel this impressed upon their minds, so that they can by no means forget it. "The great eye is over us, let us be afraid *." Great is our God, and holy; even the angels worship him. Let his saints approach him, but with humility and fear; but, as for the slothful, and those that are immersed in guilt, that securely and with pleasure indulge themselves in impure affections, let them not dare to come near. Yet, if there are any, let their guilt and pollution be ever so great, who find arising within them a hearty aversion to their own impurity, and an earnest desire after holiness; behold there is opened for you a living and pure fountain, most effectual for cleansing and washing away all sort of stains, as well as for refreshing languishing and thirsty souls. And he that is the living and never-failing fountain of purity and grace, encourages, calls, and exhorts you to come to him, "Come unto me, all ye that are athirst, &c." And again, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me, and him that cometh unto me, I will, by no means, reject or cast out [s]."

Ask yourselves, therefore, what you would be at, and with what dispositions you come to this most sacred table? Say, whither art thou going, and what seekest thou, O my soul? For it would be an instance of the most extravagant sloth and folly to set about a matter of so great importance, and so

* ἔμμα μέγα τρομεῖμεν. [s] John vi. 37.

serious, without any end, without the prospect of any advantage, and therefore without any serious turn of mind, or as one doing nothing; yet this is the case of vast numbers, that meet together in divine assemblies, and at this holy sacrament. Is it any wonder, that those should find nothing, who absolutely have nothing in view? and that he who, is bound for no harbour, should meet with no favourable wind? They give themselves up to the torrent of custom, and steer not their course to any particular port, but fluctuate and know not whither they are carried; or, if they are alarmed with any sting of conscience, it is only a kind of inconsiderate and irregular motion, and reaches no further than the exterior surface of sacred institutions. But, as for you, who, according to the expression of the angels, "Seek Jesus, fear not, you will certainly find him, and in him all things: for it hath pleased the Father, that in him all fullness should dwell [c];" so that in him there is no vacuity, and without him nothing else but emptiness and vanity; let us embrace him, therefore, with our whole hearts, and on him alone let us depend and rely.

Let his death, which we commemorate by this mystery, extinguish in us all worldly affections: may we feel his divine power working us into a conformity to his sacred image; and having our strength, as it were, renewed by his means, let us travel towards our heavenly country, constantly following him with a resolute and accelerated pace.

The concern of purifying the heart in good earnest, taking proper measures for conforming the life to the rules of the gospel, is equally incumbent upon all. For this is the great and true design of all divine worship, and of all religious institutions; though the greater part of mankind satisfy themselves with the outward surface of them, and there-

[c] Col. i. 19.

fore catch nothing but shadows in religion itself, as well as in the other concerns of life. We have public prayers, and solemn sacraments; yet, if amidst all these, one should look for the true and lively characters of Christian faith, or, in the vast numbers that attend these institutions, he should search for those that, in the course of their lives, approve themselves the true followers of their great Master, he would find reason to compare them to "a few persons, swimming at a great distance from one another, in a vast ocean *."

It has been observed long ago by one, "that in Rome itself he had found nothing of Rome †;" which, with too great truth, might be applied to religion, about which we make so great a bustle at present: there is scarce any thing at all of religion in it; unless we imagine that religion consists of words, as a grove does of trees. For, if we suppose it lies in the mortification of sin, unfeigned humility, brotherly charity, and a noble contempt of the world and the flesh, "whither has it gone, and left us ‡?" As for you, young gentlemen, if you would apply to this matter in good earnest, you must, of necessity, bestow some time and pains upon it, and not fondly dream, that such great advantages can be met with by chance, or in consequence of a negligent and superficial enquiry. If we are to alter the course of our life for the time to come, we must look narrowly into our conduct during the preceding part of it; for the measures to be taken for the future are, in a great degree, suggested by what is past. He acts wisely, and is a happy man, who frequently, nay, daily reviews his words and actions; because he will, doubtless, perform the same duty with greater ease, and to better purpose, when he is called to it with more than ordinary solemnity.

* Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.

† Se in Romæ, Roma nihil invenisse.

‡ Πυ ποτε ἡμᾶς κατέλιπεν.

And, therefore, they, who have experienced how pleasant this work is, and what a mixture of utility is joined with this pleasure, will apply to it with a chearful mind, whenever opportunity requires it; as to others, they must of necessity, set about it some time or other: I say of necessity, if I am allowed to say it is necessary to avoid the wrath to come, and to obtain peace and salvation. Repentance may possibly appear a laborious and unpleasant work to our indolence, and *to repent*, may seem a harsh expression; to perish, however, is still more harsh; but a sinful man has no other choice. Our Lord, who is truth itself, being acquainted with the cruel execution performed by Herod upon the Galileans, takes this opportunity to declare to his hearers, that, "unless they repented, they should all likewise perish[a]." The Saviour of the world, it is true, came for this very purpose, that he might save those that were miserable and lost, from the fatal necessity of being utterly undone; but he never intended to take away the happy and pleasant necessity of repentance: nay, he strengthened the obligation to it, and imposed it as a duty, inseparably connected with grace and happiness; and this connection he not only preached in expressions to the same purpose with his forerunner John the Baptist, but even in the very same words; "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand[b]." And in another place, having told us, that he came "not to call the righteous, but sinners[d]," he immediately adds to what he called those sinners; not to a liberty of indulging themselves in sin, but from sin to repentance. His blood, which was shed on the cross, is indeed a balsam more precious than all the balm of Gilead and Arabia, and all the ointments of the whole world; but it is solely intended for curing the contrite in heart.

But, alas! that gross ignorance of God, that over-

[a] Luke xiii. 3. [b] Matt. iv. 7. [d] Matt. ix. 13.

clouds our mind, is the great and the unhappy cause of all the guilt we have contracted, and of that impenitence which engages us to continue in it. Had men but the least knowledge, how disagreeable and hateful all sinful pollution renders us to his eternal and infinite purity; and, on the other hand, what a likeness to him we attain by holiness, and how amiable we are thereby rendered in his sight, they would look upon this as the only valuable attainment, they would pursue it with the most vigorous efforts of their minds, and would make it their constant study day and night; that, according to the divine advice of the apostle, "being cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, they might perfect holiness in the fear of God[n]."

[n] 2 Cor. vii. 1.

An EXHORTATION *to the* STUDENTS, *upon their return to the* UNIVERSITY *after the Vacation.*

WE are at last returned, and some, for the first time, brought hither by that supreme hand, which holds the reins of this vast universe, which rules the stormy winds, and swelling sea, and distributes peace and war to nations according to its pleasure. The great Lord of the universe, and Father of mankind, while he rules the world with absolute sway, does not despise this little flock, provided we look up unto him, and humbly pray, that we may feel the favourable effects of his presence and bounty; nay, he will not disdain to dwell within us, and in our hearts, unless we, through folly, and ignorance of our true happiness, shut the door against him, when he offers to come in. He is the Most High, yet has chosen the humble heart for the most agreeable place of his residence on this earth: but the proud and haughty, who look with disdain on their inferiors, he, on his part, despises, and beholds, as it were, afar off. He is most holy, and dwells in no hearts, but such as are purged from the dross of earthly affections; and that these may be holy, and really capable of receiving his sacred Majesty, they must of necessity be purified. "Know ye not, says the divine apostle, that you, even your bodies, are the temples of the Holy Ghost[k]," and therefore are to be preserved pure and holy? but the mind, that dwells within them, must be still more holy; as being the priest that, with constant and unwearied piety, offers up the sacrifices and sweet incense of pious affections, chearful obedience, ardent prayers, and divine praises, to the Deity of that temple.

[k] 1 Cor. vi. 19.

Of your studies, and exotic learning, I intend not to say much. The knowledge, I own, that men of letters, who are the most indefatigable in study, and have the advantage of the greatest abilities, can possibly attain to, is at best but very small. But since the knowledge of languages and sciences, however inconsiderable it may be, is the business of this society of ours, and of that period of years you are to pass here, let us do, pray, as the Hebrews express it, "the work of the day while the day lasts*;" for time slips silently away, and every succeeding hour is attended with greater disadvantages than that which went before it †."

Study to acquire such a philosophy as is not barren and babbling, but solid and true; not such an one as floats upon the surface of endless verbal controversies, but one that enters into the nature of things; for he spoke good sense, that said, "The philosophy of the Greeks was a mere jargon, and noise of words ‡."

You, who are engaged in philosophical enquiries, ought to remember in the mean time, that you are not so strictly confined to that study, but you may, at the same time, become proficients in elocution; and, indeed, it is proper you should. I would therefore have you to apply to both these studies with equal attention, that so you may not only attain some knowledge of nature, but also be in condition to communicate your sentiments, with ease, upon those subjects you understand, and clothe your thoughts with words and expressions; without which, all your knowledge will differ but very little from buried ignorance.

In joining these two studies together, you have not only reason for your guide, but also Aristotle

* Opus diei in die suo.

† Tempus nam tacitum subruit, horaq;
Semper præteritâ deterior subit.

‡ φιλοσοφια Ελλήνων λόγων ψοφος.

himself for your example; for we are told, that it was his custom to walk up and down in the school in the morning, teaching philosophy, particularly those speculative and more obscure points, which in that age were called *rationes acroamaticæ*, and thus he was employed till the hour appointed for anointing, and going to exercise *: but, after dinner, he applied to the more entertaining arts of persuasion, and made his scholars declaim upon such subjects as he appointed them.

But to return to my own province; for, to say the truth, I reckon all other things foreign to my purpose; whatever you do, with regard to other studies, give always the preference to sacred Christian philosophy; which is, indeed, the chief philosophy, and has the pre-eminence over every other science, because it holds Christ *to be the head*†, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid. This, the apostle tells us, was not the case of those false Christians in his time, whose philosophy regarded only some idle superstitions, and vain observations. Cultivate, therefore, I say, this sacred wisdom sent down from heaven, "Let this be your main study‡;" for its mysteries are the most profound, its precepts the most pure, and, at the same time the most pleasant. In this study, a weak understanding will be no disadvantage, if you have but a willing mind and ardent desires. Here, if any where, the observation holds, "That if you love learning, you cannot fail to make great progress therein §." For some, that have applied with great industry to human philosophy, have found it to be like a disdainful mistress, and lost their labour; but divine philosophy invites and encourages even those of the meanest parts.

And, indeed, it may be no small comfort and relief to young men of slow capacities, who make

† Μέχρι τῦ ἀλείμματος. ‡ ὡς κεφαλην κράτῖι. ‡ ἐν ταύτῃ ἐτὶ.
§ ἐαν ἦς φιλομαθὴς, ἔσῃ πολυμαθὴς. Isoc. ad Dem.

but little progress in human sciences, even when they apply to them with the most excessive labour and diligence, that this heavenly doctrine, though it be the most exalted in its own nature, is not only accessible to those of the lowest and meanest parts, but they are chearfully admitted to it, graciously received, preferred to those that are proud of their learning, and very often advanced to higher degrees of knowledge therein; according to that of the Psalmist, "The law of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the entrance of his word giveth light, it giveth also understanding unto the simple[1]." You therefore, whom some very forward * youths leave far behind in other studies, take courage; and to wipe off this stain, if it be one, and compensate this discouragement, make this your refuge; you cannot possibly arrive at an equal pitch of eloquence or philosophy with some others, but what hinders you, pray, from being as pious, as modest, as meek and humble, as holy and pure in heart, as any other person whatever? and by this means, in a very short time, you will be completely happy in the enjoyment of God, and live for ever in the blessed society of angels, and spirits of just men made perfect.

But if you want to make a happy progress in this wisdom, you must, to be sure, declare war against all the lusts of the world and the flesh, which enervate your minds, weaken your strength, and deprive you of all disposition and fitness for imbibing this pure and immaculate doctrine. How stupid is it to catch so greedily at advantages so vanishing and fleeting in their nature, if, indeed, they can be called advantages at all: "Advantages that are carried hither and hither, hurried from place to place by the uncertainty of their nature, and often fly away before they can be possessed †?" An author, remark-

[1] Psal. cxix. 130. * ἀειλόποδες.

† Τὰ ἄνω καὶ κάτω φερόμενα, καὶ περιτρεπόμενα, καὶ πρὶν λαχθῆναι ἀπιόντα.

able for his attainments in religion, justly cries out, "O! what peace and tranquillity might he possess, who could be prevailed upon to cut off all vain anxiety, and only think of those things that are of a divine and saving nature*!" Peace and tranquillity is, without doubt, what we all seek after, yet there are very few that know the way to it, though it be quite plain and open. It is indeed, no wonder, that the blind, who wander about without a guide, should mistake the plainest and most open path; but we have an infallible guide, and a most valiant leader, let us follow him alone; for he, that treadeth in his steps, can never walk in darkness.

Let us pray.

O! INVISIBLE God, who seest all things; eternal light, before whom all darkness is light, and in comparison with whom every other light is but darkness: The weak eyes of our understanding cannot bear the open and full rays of thy inaccessible light; and yet, without some glimpses of that light from heaven, we can never direct our steps, nor proceed towards that country which is the habitation of light. May it therefore please thee, O Father of lights, to send forth thy light and thy truth, that they may lead us directly to thy holy mountain. Thou art good, and the fountain of goodness; give us understanding, that we may keep thy precepts. That part of our past lives, which we have lost in pursuing shadows, is enough, and indeed too much; bring back our souls into the paths of life, and let the wonderful sweetness thereof, which far exceeds all the pleasures of this earth, powerfully, yet pleasantly, preserve us from being drawn aside therefrom by any temptation from

* O qui omnem vanam solicitudinem amputaret, & salutaria duntaxat ac divina cogitaret, quantam quietem & pacem possideret.

sin or the world. Purify, we pray thee, our souls from all impure imaginations, that thy most beautiful and holy image may be again renewed within us, and by contemplating thy glorious perfections, we may feel daily improved within us that divine similitude, the perfection whereof we hope, will at last make us for ever happy in that full and beatific vision we aspire after. Till this most blessed day break, and the shadows fly away, let thy Spirit be continually with us, and may we feel the powerful effects of his divine grace constantly directing and supporting our steps, that all our endeavours, not only in this society, but throughout the whole remaining part of our lives, may serve to promote the honour of thy blessed name, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

EXHORTATIONS

TO THE

CANDIDATES

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

EXHORTATIONS, &c.

EXHORTATION I.

WERE I allowed to speak freely what I sincerely think of most of the affairs of human life, even those that are accounted of the highest importance, and transacted with the greatest eagerness and bustle, I should be apt to say, "that a great noise is made about trifles *:" but if you should take this amiss, as a little unseasonable upon the present occasion, and an insult upon your solemnity, I hope you will the more easily forgive me, that I place in the same rank, with this philosophical convention of yours, the most famous councils and general assemblies of princes and great men; and say of their golden crowns, as well as your crowns of laurel, "that they are things of no value, and not worth the purchasing †." Even the triumphal, inaugural, or nuptial processions of the greatest kings and generals of armies, with whatever pomp and magnificence, as well as art, they may be set off, they are, after all, so far true representations of their false, painted, and tinsel happiness, that, while we look at them, they fly away; and, in a very short time, they are followed by their funeral

* Magno conatu magnas nugas.

† Καπνῦ σκιᾶς οὐκ ἂν πριάμην.

processions, which are the triumphs of death over those who have, themselves, triumphed during their lives. The scenes are shifted, the actors also disappear; and, in the same manner, the greatest shews of this vain world likewise pass away. Let us, that we may lop off the luxuriant branches of our vines, take a nearer view of this object, and remember, that what we now call a laurel crown, will soon be followed by cypress wreaths: it will be also proper to consider how many, that in their time were employed, as we are now, have long ago acted their parts, and are now consigned to a long oblivion; as also, what vast numbers of the rising generation are following us at the heels, and, as it were, pushing us forward to the same land of forgetfulness; who, while they are hurrying us away, are at the same time hastening thither themselves. All that we see, all that we do, and all that we are, are but mere dreams; and if we are not sensible of this truth, it is because we are still asleep: none but minds that are awake can discern it; they, and they only, can perceive and despise these *illusions* * of the night. In the mean time, nothing hinders us from submitting to these, and other such customary formalities, provided our doing it interfere not with matters of much greater importance, and prospects of a different and more exalted nature. What is it, pray, to which, with the most ardent wishes, you have been aspiring, throughout the whole course of these four last years? Here you have a cap and a title, and nothing at all more. But, perhaps, taking this amiss, you secretly blame me in your hearts, and wish me to congratulate you upon the honour you have obtained. I chearfully comply with your desire, and am willing to explain myself. These small presents are not the principal reward of your labours, nor the chief end of your studies; but hono-

* ἐμπαίγματα.

rary marks and badges of that erudition and knowledge, wherewith your minds have been stored by the uninterrupted labours of four whole years. But whatever attainments in learning you have reached, I would have you seriously to reflect, how inconsiderable they are, and how little they differ from nothing; nay, if what we know is compared with what we know not, it will be found even vastly less than nothing: at least, it is an argument of little knowledge, and the sign of a vain and weak mind, to be puffed up with an overbearing opinion of our own knowledge: while, on the contrary, it is an evidence of a great proficiency in knowledge, to be sensible of our ignorance and inability. "He is the wisest man, says Plato, who knows himself to be very ill qualified for the attainment of wisdom *." Whatever be in this, we often find the sciences and arts which you cultivate, to be useless and entirely barren, with regard to the advantages of life; and, generally speaking, those other professions that are illiterate and illiberal, nay, even unlawful, meet with better treatment, and greater encouragement than what we call the liberal arts. "He that ventures upon the sea, is enriched by his voyages: he that engages in war, glitters with gold: the mean parasite lies drunk on a rich bed; and even he, who endeavours to corrupt married women, is rewarded for his villainy. Learning alone starves in tattered rags, and invokes the abandoned arts in vain †."

* Οὗτος σοφώτατος, ὅστις ἔγνωκεν ὅτι ἔδεινος ἄξιος ἐστὶ πρὸς σοφίαν. Philo. apol. Socr.

† Qui pelago credit, magno se fœnore tollit;
Qui pugnas & castra petit, præcingitur auro:
Vilis adulator picto jacet ebrius ostro;
Et qui sollicitat nuptas, ad præmia peccat.
Sola pruinosis horret facundia pannis,
Atque inopi lingua desertas invocat artes.

But as sometimes the learned meet with a better fate, you, young gentlemen, I imagine, entertain better hopes with regard to your fortune; nor would I discourage them, yet I would gladly moderate them a little by this wholesome advice; lean not upon a broken reed, neither let any one, who values his peace, his real dignity, and his satisfaction, give himself up to hopes, that are uncertain, frail and deceitful. The human race are, perhaps, the only creatures, that by this means become a torment to themselves; for, as we always grasp at futurity, we vainly promise ourselves many and great things, in which, as commonly happens, being for the most part disappointed, we must, of necessity, pay for our foolish pleasure with a proportionate degree of pain. Thus, the greatest part of mankind find the whole of this wretched life checquered with delusive joys and real torments, ill-grounded hopes and fears equally imaginary: amidst these, we live in continual suspense, and die so too.

But a few, alas! a few only, yet some, who think more justly, having set their hearts upon heavenly enjoyments, take pleasure in despising, with a proper greatness of mind, and trampling upon the fading enjoyments of this world. These make it their only study, and exert their utmost efforts that, having the more divine part of their composition weaned from the world and the flesh, they may be brought to a resemblance and union with the holy and supreme God, the Father of spirits, by purity, piety, and an habitual contemplation of divine objects: and this, to be sure, is the principal thing, with a noble ambition whereof I would have your minds inflamed; and whatever profession, or manner of life you devote yourselves to, it is my earnest exhortation and request, that you would make this your constant and principal study. Fly, if you have any regard to my advice, fly far from that controversial contentious school-divinity, which in

fact, consists in fruitless disputes about words, and rather deserves the name of vain and foolish talking.

Almost all mankind are constantly catching at something more than they possess, and torment themselves in vain; nor is our rest to be found among these enjoyments of the world, where all things are covered with a deluge of vanity, as with a flood of fluctuating restless waters; and the soul flying about, looking in vain for a place, on which it may set its foot, most unhappily loses its time, its labour, and itself at last, like "the birds in the days of the flood, which having long sought for land, till their strength was quite exhausted, fell down at last, and perished in the waters *."

O! how greatly preferable to these bushes and briars, and thorns, are the delightful fields of the gospel, wherein pleasure and profit are agreeably mixt together, whence you may learn the way to everlasting peace, that poverty of spirit, which is the only true riches, that purity of heart, which is our greatest beauty, and that inexpressible satisfaction, which attends the exercise of charity, humility, and meekness? When your minds are stored and adorned with these graces, they will enjoy the most pleasant tranquillity, even amidst the noise and tumults of this present life; and you will be, to use the words of Tertullian, *candidates for eternity*; a title infinitely more glorious and sublime, than what has been this day conferred upon you. And that great and last day, which is so much dreaded by the slaves of this present world, will be the most happy and auspicious to you; as it will deliver you from a dark dismal prison, and place you in the regions of the most full and marvellous light.

* Quæ finisq; diu terris ubi sistere detur,
In mare lassatis volucris vaga decidit alis.

Let us pray.

Most exalted God, who hast alone created, and dost govern this whole frame, and all the inhabitants thereof, visible and invisible, whose name is alone wonderful, and to be celebrated with the highest praise, as it is indeed above all praise and admiration. Let the heavens, the earth, and all the elements, praise thee; let darkness, light, all the returns of days and years, and all the varieties and vicissitudes of things, praise thee; let the angels praise thee, the archangels, and all the blessed court of heaven, whose very happiness it is, that they are constantly employed in celebrating thy praises. We confess, O Lord, that we are of all creatures the most unworthy to praise thee, yet, of all others, we are under the greatest obligations to do it; nay, the more unworthy we are, our obligation is so much the greater. From this duty, however unqualified we may be, we can by no means abstain, nor indeed ought we. Let our souls bless thee, and all that is within us praise thy holy name, who forgivest all our sins, and healest all our diseases, who deliverest our souls from destruction, and crownest them with bounty and tender mercies. Thou searchest the heart, O Lord, and perfectly knowest the most intimate recesses of it: reject not those prayers, which thou perceivest to be the voice and the wishes of the heart; now it is the great request of our hearts, unless they always deceive us, that they may be weaned from all earthly and perishing enjoyments; and if there is any thing to which they cleave with more than ordinary force, may they be pulled away from it by thy Almighty hand, that they may be joined to thee for ever in an inseparable marriage-covenant; and, in our own behalf, we have nothing more to ask. We only add, in behalf of thy church, that it may be protected under the shadow of thy wings, and every where, throughout

the world, watered by thy heavenly dew, that the spirit and heat of worldly hatred against it may be cooled, and its intestine divisions, whereby it is much more grievously scorched, extinguished. Bless this nation, this city, and this university, in which, we beg, thou wouldst be pleased to reside, as in a garden dedicated to thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXHORTATION II.

WOULD you have me to speak the truth with freedom and brevity? The whole world is a kind of stage, and its inhabitants mere actors. As to this little farce of yours, it is now very near a conclusion, and you are upon the point of applying to the spectators for their applause. Should any superciliously decline paying this small *tribute* *, you surely may, with great ease, retort their contempt upon themselves, merely by saying, "Let your severity fall heavy on those, who admire their own performances; as to this affair of ours, we know it is nothing at all:" for I will not allow myself to doubt, but you are very sensible, that there is indeed nothing in it.

It would, to be sure, be very improper, especially as the evening approaches, to detain you, and my other hearers, with a long and tedious discourse, when you are already more than enough fatigued, and almost quite tired out, with hearing. I shall therefore only ut you in mind of one thing, and that in a few words. Let not this solemn *toy* †, however agreeable to youthful minds, so far impose upon you, as to set you a dreaming of great advantages and pleasures to be met with in this new period of life you are entering upon. Look round you, if you please, and take a near and exact survey of all the different stations of life that are set before you. If you enter upon any of the stations of active life, what is this but jumping into a bush of thorns, where

* ἴραγον. † ἴμπαιγμα.

you can have no hope of enjoying quiet, and yet cannot easily get out again? But if you rather chuse to enter upon some new branch of science, alas! what a small measure of knowledge is to be thus obtained, with what vast labour is even that little to be purchased, and how often, after immense toil and difficulty, will it be found, that truth is still at a distance, and not yet extracted out of the well * ? We indeed believe that the soul breathed into man, when he was first made, was pure, full of light, and every way worthy of its divine original: but ah! Father of mankind, how soon and how much was he changed from what he was at first! He foolishly gave ear to the fatal seducer, and that very moment was seized upon by death, whereby he at once lost his purity, his light or truth; and, together with himself, ruined us also.

Now, since that period, what do you commonly meet with among men of wisdom and learning, as they would wish to be accounted, but fighting and bickering in the dark: and while they dispute, with the greatest heat, but at random, concerning the truth, that truth escapes out of their hands, and instead of it, both parties put up with vain shadows or phantoms of it, and, according to the proverb, embrace a cloud instead of Juno.

But since we are forced to own, that even the most contemptible and minutest things in nature, often put all our philosophical subtlety to a nonplus, what ignorance and foolish *presumption* † is it for us to aim at ransacking the most hidden recesses of divine things, and boldly attempt to scan the divine decrees, and the other most profound mysteries of religion, by the imperfect and scanty measures of our understandings? Whither would the presumption of man hurry him, while it prompts him to pry into every secret and hidden thing, and leave nothing at all unattempted?

* ἐκ τοῦ βυθοῦ ἡ ἀλήθεια? † ἀυθαδείας.

As for you, young gentlemen, especially those of you that intend to devote yourselves to theological studies, it is my earnest advice and request to you, that you fly far from that infectious curiosity, which would lead you into the depths of that controversial, contentious theology, which, if any doctrine at all deserves the name, may be truly termed, "science falsely so called *." And that you may not, in this respect, be imposed upon by the common reputation of acuteness and learning, I confidently affirm, that to understand and be master of those trifling disputes that prevail in the schools, is an evidence of a very mean understanding; while, on the contrary, it is an argument of a genius truly great, entirely to slight and despise them, and to walk in the light of pure and peaceable truth, which is far above the dark and cloudy region of controversial disputes. But you will say, it is necessary, in order to the defence of truth, to oppose errors, and blunt the weapons of Sophists. Be it so, but our disputes ought to be managed with few words, for naked truth is most effectual for its own defence, and when it is once well understood, its natural light dispels all the darkness of error; "for all things that are reproved, are made manifest by the light[1]," saith the apostle. Your favourite philosopher has also told us, "That what is strait discovers both rectitude and obliquity." And Clemens Alexandrinus has very justly observed, "That the ancient philosophers were not greatly disposed to disputes or doubting; but the latter philosophers among the Greeks, out of a vain desire to enhance their reputation, engaged so for in wrangling and contention, that their works became quite useless and trifling †."

* Ψευδώνυμος γνώσις. [1] Eph. v. 13.

† ὅτι οἱ παλαιότατοι των φιλοσοφῶν οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τὸ αμοιβητεῖν καὶ ἀπορεῖν ἐφέροντο ἀλλ' οἱ τῶν παρ' ἕλλησι νεώτεροι ὑπὸ φιλοτιμίας κενῆς καὶ ἀτελοῦς ἐλεγκτικῶς ἅμα καὶ ἐριστικῶς εἰς τὴν ἀχρηστον ἐξαγονται φλυαρίαν.

There is but one useful controversy or dispute, one sort of war, most noble in its nature, and most worthy of a Christian, and this not to be carried on against enemies at a great distance, but such as are bred within our own breasts; against those it is most reasonable to wage an endless war, and them it is our duty to persecute to death. Let us all, children, young men and old, exert ourselves vigorously in this warfare; let our vices die before us, that death may not find us indolent, defiled, and wallowing in the mire; for then it will be most truly, and to our great misery, death to us: whereas, to those sanctified souls, who are conformed to Christ, and conquerors by his means, it rather is to be called life, as it delivers them from their wanderings and vices, from all kinds of evils, and from that death which is final and eternal.

Let us pray.

ETERNAL GOD, who art constantly adored by thrones and powers, by seraphims and cherubims, we confess, that thou art most worthy to be praised; but we, of all others, are the most unworthy to be employed in shewing forth thy praise. How can polluted bodies, and impure souls, which, taken together, are nothing but mere sinks of sin, praise thee, the pure and holy Majesty of heaven? Yet, how can these bodies, which thou hast wonderfully formed, and those souls, which thou hast inspired, which owe entirely to thine unmerited favour all that they are, all that they possess, and all they hope for, forbear praising thee, their wise and bountiful Creator and Father? Let our souls, therefore, and all that is within us, bless thy holy name; yea, let all our bones say, O Lord, who is like unto thee; who is like unto thee? Far be it, most gracious Father, from our hearts, to harbour any thing that is displeasing to thee: let them be, as it were,

temples dedicated to thy service, thoroughly purged from every idol and image, from every object of impure love and earthly affection. Let our most gracious King and Redeemer dwell and reign within us; may he take full possession of us by his spirit, and govern all our actions. May he extend his peaceable and saving kingdom throughout the whole habitable world, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof.

Let the nations acknowledge their king, and the isles be glad in him, and particularly that which we inhabit, with those in its neigbourhood; and that they may be truly blest in him, may they daily submit, more perfectly and dutifully to his golden sceptre, and the holy laws of his gospel. Bless this nation and city, and this our university; may it be continually watered with the due of thy spirit, and plentifully produce fruit acceptable in thy sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXHORTATION III.

THIS day, which has been the object of your earnest wishes, throughout the course of four whole years, is now almost over, and hastening to a close. What has it produced for your advantage? Can he, that has reapt most successfully of you all, say he has filled his arms with sheaves? Though possibly you would excuse me to express myself with great freedom on this occasion, yet I will not take the liberty to depreciate too much your past studies, the specimens you have given to-day of your abilities, and the degree that has been conferred upon you. This at least, I imagine, I may say, without offence, the most of those things we greedily catch at, and labour most earnestly to obtain, and consequently even your philosophy, is a real and demonstrative truth of that great paradox, *that there is a vacuity in the nature of things.* And, in truth, how great is this vacuity! seeing even the human race is no inconsiderable part of it? Though this day is marked with more than ordinary solemnity, it is, after all, but the conclusion and period of a number of days, that have been idly spent, and is itself elapsing to little or no purpose, as well as the rest. But O! how glorious must that blessed day be, which all purified souls, and such as are dear to God, earnestly long for, throughout the whole of this perishing life, and constantly wait, with a kind of impatience, until it dawn, and the shadows fly away.

I am, indeed, of opinion, that those of you, who think most justly, will readily own, your attainments, hitherto, are of no great moment. But, possibly,

henceforth you intend to begin life, as it were, anew; you aspire to greater matters, and entertain views worthy of human nature; you already begin to live, and to be wise; you form desires, and conceive hopes of rising to arts, riches, and honours: all this is very well. Yet there is one consideration I would have you to admit among these ingenious projects and designs. What if death should come upon you, and looking, with an envious eye, upon this towering prospect, put a stop to a project that extends itself so far into futurity, and, like a spider's web, entirely destroy it with a gentle breath of wind? Nor would this be any prodigy, or indeed an extraordinary event, but the common fate of almost all mankind. "We are always resolving to live, and yet never set about life in good earnest *." Archimedes was not singular in his fate; but a great part of mankind die unexpectedly, while they are poring upon the figures they have described in the sand. O wretched mortals! who having condemned themselves, as it were, to the mines, seem to make it their chief study to prevent their ever regaining their liberty. Hence new employments are assumed in the place of old ones; and, as the Roman philosopher truly expresses it, "one hope succeeds another, one instance of ambition makes way for another; and we never desire an end of our misery, but only that it may change its outward form †." When we cease to be candidates, and to fatigue ourselves in soliciting interest, we begin to give our votes and interest to those who solicit us in their turn: when we are wearied of the trouble of prosecuting crimes at the bar, we commence judges ourselves; and he, who is grown old in the management of other mens affairs for money, is at last employed in improving his own wealth. At the age of fifty, says one, I will retire,

* Victuros agimus semper, nec vivimus unquam.

† Spes spem excipit, ambitionem ambititio, & miseriarum non quæritur finis, sed schema tantum mutatur.

and take my ease; or the sixtieth year of my life shall entirely disengage me from publick offices and business. Fool! art thou not ashamed to reserve to thyself the last remains and dregs of life? Who will stand surety, that thou shalt live so long? and what immense folly is it, so far to forget mortality, as to think of beginning to live at that period of years, to which a few only attain?

As for you, young Gentlemen, I heartily wish you may think more justly; let your souls, as it were, retire into themselves, and dwell at home; and having shaken off the trifles that make a bustle and noise around you, consider seriously, that the remaining part of your life is long only in one respect, (and in this indeed its length may be justly complained of) that it is fraught with every sort of misery and affliction, and has nothing agreeable in it, but the study of heavenly wisdom alone; "for every thing else is vanity *." Look about you and see, whether there is any thing worthy of your affection, and whether every thing you see does not rather excite your indignation and aversion? At home are contentions and disputes; abroad, in the fields, robbers; clamour and noise at the bar; wickedness in the camp; hypocrisy in the church; and vexation or lamentable mistakes every where. Among the rich and great there are false and inconstant friendships, bitter enmities, envy, fraud, and falshood; and cares, in great numbers, flutter round the most stately and sumptuous palaces.

What a considerable part of mankind are struggling with open and sharp afflictions? To whatever side you turn yourself, what do you commonly hear, but lamentation and mourning? How many complaints of the poor, that are distressed for want of daily bread, or drag a most wretched life under the grievous oppression of powerful tyrants? How frequent are the groans of the sick and languishing?

* Τὰ δὲ ἄλλα τύφος.

How great the multitude of those that lament their friends and relations, carried off by death, and will themselves, in a short time, and for the same reason, be lamented by others? And to conclude, how innumerable are the miseries and afflictions, of various kinds, that seem alternately to re-echo to one another? Can it be any wonder then, that a life of this kind should sometimes force, even from a wise man, such expressions of sorrow and concern, as the following: "O mother, why didst thou bring me forth, to be oppressed with afflictions and sorrows? Why didst thou introduce me into a life full of briars and thorns *?"

But you are now philosophers, and amidst these dismal calamities, you comfort yourselves with the inward and hidden riches of wisdom, and the sciences you have acquired. The sciences! Tell us in what part of the earth they are to be found? Let us know, pray, where they dwell, that we may flock thither in great numbers. I know, indeed, where there is abundance of noise, with vain and idle words, and a jarring of opinions, between contending disputants; I know where ignorance, under the disguise of a gown and a beard, has obtained the title of science: but, where true knowledge is to be found, I know not. We grope in the dark, and though it is truth only we are in quest of, we fall into innumerable errors. But, whatever may be our case, with respect to the knowledge of nature, as to that of heavenly and divine things, let us chearfully embrace that rich present, which infinite gooodness has made us, and be thankful, that the day-spring from on high hath visited us. "Because there was no wisdom on the earth, says Lanctantius, he sent a teacher from heaven †." Him let us follow as our guide; for he that follows his direction, shall not walk in darkness.

† Μήτερ ἐμὴ τί μ' ἔτικες ἔπει πολύμοχθον ἔτικτες,
Τίκτειμὶ τωδὲ βίῳ δύπας ακανθοφόρῳ.

* Cum nulla in terris esset sapientia e cœlo misit doctorem.

Let us Pray.

INFINITE, eternal Creator and King of heaven and earth, bodies, and spirits, who, being immoved thyself, movest all things, and changest them at thy pleasure, while thou remainest thyself altogether unchangeable, who supportest all things by thy powerful hand, and governest them by thy nod, the greatest as well as the least; so that the greatest are no burden to thee, nor dost thou contemn the least. Behold! the nations, before thee, are as the drop of the bucket, and like the small dust of the balance; and these isles of ours, with all the rest in the world, are, in thy sight, but a very little thing. Yet thou deignest to be present in our assemblies, and take notice of our affairs, which are very inconsiderable. Let our souls adore thee, and fall down, with the greatest humility, at the footstool of thy throne, continually intreating thy grace, and constantly offering thee glory. Our praises add nothing to thee; but they exalt ourselves, enhance our happiness, and unite us with the society of angels; yet thou receivest them, with a gracious hand, as most acceptable sacrifices, and incense of a sweet smelling-savour. Let us celebrate thee, O Lord, who art great, and greatly to be praised. Let all nations praise thee, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. Set our hearts on fire with the flames of thy divine love, that they may wholly ascend to thee as burnt-offerings, and nothing of ours may remain with us. O blessed transmigration, where the blind confidence of the flesh is transformed into a lively and pure faith, that has no dependance, but upon thee alone; where self-love, and the love of the world, are exchanged for the love of thy infinite beauty; when our will shall centre in thine, and be altogether absorbed by it. Let this change, O bountiful Father, be brought about, for it is a change only to be effected by the power of thy hand; and, as

soon as our souls are made sensible of it, thy praise shall be for ever sounded within us, as in temples devoted to thy service.

Let thy whole church, O Lord, flourish and rejoice in the light of thy favour. Be favourable to this our university, city, and nation. Dispel, we pray thee, the thick clouds, and quiet the winds and storms; for when they rage most, and make the greatest noise, they know thy voice, and obey it. Thou art the only God of peace, who createst it with a word, and makest righteousness and peace mutually to kiss one another. We depend upon thee only; and to thee alone we render praise and glory, as far as we can, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

EXHORTATION IV.

OUR life is but a point, and even less than a point; but as it is not a mathematical point, as they call it, not quite indivisible, when we divide it into minute parts, it appears something considerable, and assumes the imaginary appearance of a large space of time; nay, according to Aristotle's notion, it appears divisible *in infinitum*. Besides those common and idle divisions of human life, into the four stages of childhood, youth, manhood, and old age, and into periods of ten years, which suppose the yet smaller divisions of years and months; men have many various ways of distributing the periods of their life, according to the different occupations and studies they have been engaged in, the remarkable events that have happened to them, and the several alterations and revolutions in the course of their lives. And I doubt not, but you, young Gentlemen, look upon this present instant of time, as the beginning of a new period of your life; you have my leave to do so, provided you seriously consider, at the same time, that the whole of the life, we live in this world, is of a frail and fleeting nature, and, in some respect, nothing at all. And into whatever parts or periods we divide it, if we consider the miseries, and lamentable calamities, with which it is fraught, the life, even of a child, may seem too long; but, if we consider the time only, we must conclude the life of the oldest man to be exceeding short and fleeting.

A great part of mankind no sooner look upon themselves to be capable of worldly affairs, and think on entering upon some profession suitable to a

state of manhood, but they are cut off, in the very beginning of their course, by an unforeseen and untimely death; and, to be sure, this is the great distemper of young, and even of old men, that, by their desires and designs, they launch out a great way into futurity, and form a series of projects for many years to come; while, in the mean time, they rarely, or at least very superficially, consider, how foolish and precarious it is to depend upon to-morrow, and how soon this present form of ours may disappear; how soon we may return to our original dust: "And that very day," as the royal prophet warns us, "our thoughts, even the wisest and best concerted thoughts of the greatest men, and most exalted princes, perish." And this I take particular notice of, that no such illusion may get possession of your minds; for it is not the common sort of mankind only, that impose upon themselves in this respect, but the generality of those, who desire to be accounted not only men of learning, but also adepts in wisdom, and actually pass for such. Not that I would prohibit your making an early and prudent choice, under the divine direction, of the employment and profession of life you intend to pursue; nay, I would use every argument to persuade you to make use of such a choice, and when you have made it, to prosecute the intention of it with the greatest diligence and activity. I only put you upon your guard, not to entertain many and towering hopes in this world, nor form a long series of connected projects; because you will find them all more vain and fleeting than illusions of the night: some necessary means will fail, some favourable opportunity be missed; after all your industry, the expected event may not happen, or the thread of your life may be cut, and thereby all your projects rendered abortive. And though your life should be drawn out to ever so great a length, and success constantly answer your expectations, yet you know, and I wish you would remember it, the fatal day will come at last, perhaps when it is least expected; that

fatal and final day, I say, will at last come, when we must leave all our enjoyments, and all our schemes, those we are now carrying on, and those we have brought to perfection, as well as those that are only begun, and those that subsist only in hopes and ideas.

And these very arguments, that have been used to confine your minds from indulging themselves in too remote prospects, will also serve to persuade you, in another sense, to look much farther; not with regard to worldly enjoyments, for such prospects, strictly speaking, cannot be called long, but to look far beyond all earthly and perishing things, to those that are heavenly and eternal: and those that will not raise their eyes to such objects, as the Apostle Peter expresses it, "are blind and cannot see afar off."

But of you, my dear youths, I expect better things; I need not, I imagine, use many words to persuade you to industry, and a continual progress in human studies, and philosophical learning. If the violence and infelicity of the times have deprived you of any part of that period of years, usually employed in these studies at this university, you will surely repair that loss, as soon as possible, by your subsequent reading and application. But, if no such misfortune had happened, you are not, I believe, ignorant, that our schools are only intended for laying the foundations of those studies, upon which years, and indefatigable industry, are to raise the superstructure of more compleat erudition; which, by the accession of the divine Spirit, may be consecrated into a temple for God. And this is what I would recommend to your esteem, and your earnest desires, beyond any other study whatever, "That you may be holy, because our God is holy;" that, when you leave this university, those, with whom you converse, may not find you puffed up with pride, on account of a little superficial learning, nor bigotted, talkative, or fond of entering into unseasonable disputes; but

consider you all as patterns and examples of piety, purity, temperance, modesty, and all christian virtues; particularly that humility, that shone so brightly in Christ himself, and which he earnestly exhorts all his disciples to learn from him. I will not suspect, that any one of you will turn out to be an immodest person, a glutton or drunkard, or, in any shape, impious and profane; but I earnestly exhort and beseech you, my dear young men, to make it, above all other things, your principal study, to have your hearts purged from all impure and ignoble love of the world and the flesh, that, in this earth, you may live to God only; and then, to be sure, when you remove out of it, you will live with him for ever in heaven.

May the honorary title, you have this day received, be happy and auspicious; but I earnestly pray the Father of lights, that he would deign to bestow upon you a title more solid and exalted, than it is in the power of man to give, that you may be called the Sons of God, and your conversation may be suitable to so great a name, and so glorious a Father.

Let us pray.

ETERNAL King, thy throne is established and immoveable from everlasting, and will continue so throughout all the ages of eternity: before the mountains were brought forth, before thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. All things that exist, whether visible or invisible, derive from thee their being, and all that they possess, and they all, from the least to the greatest, are subservient to thy purposes, who art their supreme King and Father: many of them, indeed, act without knowledge, or design, yet serve thee with a constant and unerring obedience; others pay their

homage from principles of reason and inclination, and all the rest are forced to promote thy intentions, though by constraint, and against their wills. Thou art great, O Lord, thou art great, and greatly to be praised, and of thy greatness there is no end. The heavens are far raised above the earth, but thy majesty is much farther exalted above all our thoughts and conceptions. Impress, we pray thee, on our hearts, most bountiful Father, a profound sense of our meanness and insignificancy; and make us acceptable to thee, through thy grace, in thy beloved Jesus, blotting out all our sins by the blood of his cross, and purifying our hearts by the effusion of thy Spirit from on high. Illuminate, most gracious God, this assembly of ours by the light of thy divine favour, and let thy effectual blessing, we pray thee, attend the work, we are now employed about (by thy approbation, and the gracious disposition of thy providence), and may the result of all be to the glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXHORTATION V.

THE complaint, with regard to the variety of all perishing and transitory enjoyments which has been long general among mankind, is indeed just and well-founded; but it is no less true, that the vanity which resides in the heart of man himself, exceeds every thing of that kind we observe in the other parts of the visible creation: For, among all the creatures that we see around us, we can find nothing so fleeting and inconstant; it flutters hither and thither, and forsaking that only perfect good, which is truly suited to its nature and circumstances, grasps at phantoms and shadows of happiness, which it pursues with a folly more than childish.

Man wanders about on this earth; he hopes, he wishes, he seeks, he gropes and feels about him; he desires, he is hot, he is cold, he is blind, and complains that evil abounds every where: yet he is, himself, the cause of those evils which rage in the world, but most of all in his own breast; and therefore being tossed between the waves thereof, that roll continually within and without him, he leads a restless and disordered life, until he be at last swallowed up in the unavoidable gulph of death. It is, moreover, *the shame and folly** of the human race, that the greatest part of them do not resolve upon any fixed and settled method of life, but, like the brute creatures, live and die, without design, and without proposing any reasonable end. For how few are there, that seriously and frequently consider with themselves, whence they come, whither they are going, and what is the purpose of their life? who are

* ἀβελτηρία.

daily reviewing the state of their own minds, and often descend into themselves, that they may as frequently ascend, by their thoughts and meditations, to their exalted Father, and their heavenly country; who take their station upon temporal things, and view those that are eternal: yet these are the only men that can be truly said to live, and they alone can be accounted wise.

And to this it is, my dear youths, that I would willingly engage your souls; nay, I heartily wish, they were carried thither by the fiery chariots of celestial wisdom. Let the common sort of mankind admire mean things; let them place their hopes on riches, honours, and arts, and spend their lives in the pursuit of them, but let your souls be inflamed with a far higher ambition. Yet I would not altogether prohibit you these pursuits; I only desire you to be moderate in them. These enjoyments are neither great in themselves, nor permanent; but it is surprising, how much vanity is inflated by them. What a conceited, vain nothing is the creature we call man! for, because few are capable to discern true blessings, which are solid and intrinsically beautiful, therefore the superficial ones, and such as are of no value at all, are catched at; and those who, in any measure, attain to the possession of them, are puffed up and elated thereby.

If we consider things as they are, it is an evidence of a very wrong turn of mind to boast of titles and fame, as they are no part of ourselves, nor can we depend upon them. But he that is elevated with a fond conceit of his own knowledge, is a stranger to the nature of things, and particularly to himself; since he knows not that the highest pitch of human knowledge ought, in reality, rather to be called ignorance. How small and inconsiderable is the extent of our knowledge? Even the most contemptible things in nature are sufficient to expose the greatness of our ignorance. And, with respect to divine things, who dares to deny, "that the know-

ledge, mankind has of them, is next to nothing *?" Because the weak eyes of our understanding, confined, as they are, within such narrow houses of clay, cannot bear the piercing light of divine things; therefore the fountain of all wisdom hath thought proper to communicate such imperfect discoveries of himself, as are barely sufficient to direct our steps to the superior regions † of perfect light. And whoever believes this truth, will, doubtless, make it his chief care, and principal study, constantly to follow this lamp of divine light, that shines in darkness, and not to deviate from it, either to the right hand or the left. It is indeed my opinion, that no man of ingenuity ought to despise the study of philosophy, or the knowledge of languages, or grammar itself; though, to be sure, a more expeditious and successful method of teaching them, were much to be wished: but what I would recommend with the greatest earnestness, and persuade you to, if possible, is, that you would inseparably unite with such measures of learning and improvements of your minds as you can attain, purity of religion, divine love, moderation of soul, and an agreeable inoffensive behaviour. For you are not ignorant, what a low and empty figure the highest attainments in human sciences must make, if they be compared with the dignity and duration of the soul of man; for however considerable they may be in themselves, yet, with regard to their use, and their whole design, they are confined within the short space of this perishing life. But the soul, which reasons, which is employed in learning and teaching, in a few days will for ever bid farewell to all these things, and remove to another country. O how inconsiderable are all arts and sciences, all eloquence and philosophy, when compared with a cautious concern that our last exit out of this world may be happy and auspicious, and that we may depart out

* ὡς ὐδὲν ἀνθρώποισι τῶν θείων σαφές. † ὑπερτερα δώματα.

of this life candidates of immortality, at which we can never arrive but by the beautiful way of holiness.

Let us Pray.

INFINITE and eternal God, who inhabitest thick darkness, and light inaccessible, whom no mortal hath seen, or can see; yet all thy works evidently declare and proclaim thy wisdom, thy power, and thy infinite goodness: And, when we contemplate these thy perfections, what is it our souls can desire, but that they may love thee, worship thee, serve thee, for ever proclaim thy praises, and celebrate thy exalted name, which is above all praise, and all admiration? Thy throne is constantly surrounded with thousands and ten thousands of glorified spirits, who continually adore thee, and cry out without ceasing, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty*, who was, who is, and who is to come. Let others seek what they will, and find and embrace what they can, may we have always this one fixed and settled purpose, that it is good for us to draw near to God. Let the seas roar, the earth be shaken, and all things go to ruin and confusion; yet the soul, that adheres to God, will remain safe and quiet, and shall not be moved for ever. O blessed soul! that has thee for its rest, and all its salvation; it shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, it shall not fear when heat cometh, nor shall it be uneasy in a year of drought. It is our earnest petition and prayer, O Father, that thy hands may loosen all our chains, and effectually deliver our souls from all the snares and allurements of the world and the flesh, and that, by that same bountiful and most powerful hand of thine, they may be for ever united to thee through thy only begotten Son, who is our union and our peace. Be favourably present, most gracious God,

with this assembly of ours, that whatever we undertake, in obedience to thy will, may be carried to perfection by the aid of thy grace, and tend to the glory of thy name through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXHORTATION VI.

I AM not ignorant, that it is one of the common arts of life to set off our own things with all the pomp we can; and, if there is any worth in them, by no means to depreciate it, but rather to endeavour, with all our might, to enhance their value as much as possible; nay, those of them, which are quite vain and worthless, we use to magnify with pompous expressions, and daub with false colours, and to do otherwise is reckoned a kind of rustic simplicity. But you, young Gentlemen, who are acquainted with my manner, will, I imagine, easily forgive this indifference of mine; and therefore I say, if there are any, that despise these performances of ours, we leave them at full liberty, for we ourselves held them in contempt before; but to speak freely, together with them we undervalued all worldly things: "They are all made of the same mean materials." O life, short with regard to duration, long in consideration of thy miseries, involved in darkness, beset with snares, still fluctuating between false joys and real torments, groundless hopes, and fears equally imaginary, yet foolishly, and even to distraction loved by most; we will not die, and yet we know not how to live; our present possessions are loathsome as food to a man in a fever, and we greedily catch at future enjoyments, which when they come to be present, will be received with the same indifference: for among the advantages of this fleeting life, nothing is equally agreeable to those, who have it in possession, and those who have it only in desire and hope.

We are all in general of such a nature, that we are weary of ourselves, and, what we lately preferred to

* Παῦλα μία κόπος.

every thing else, upon experience we reject. This inconstancy is undoubtedly a sign of a mind distempered, forcibly drawn away from its center, and separated from its only durable rest. Nor need you go far, young Gentlemen, to look for an instance of this distemper; let any of you descend into himself (which very few do, and even they but rarely) he will find it within him: upon a very slight inquiry, he will surely be sensible of it; for, passing other considerations, with what fervent wishes have you, in your hearts, longed for this day? yet I forewarn you, that all your pleasure will either die with the day itself, which is now fast drawing to a close, or but for a very short time survive it. And, as commonly happens, it will be succeeded by the anxious cares of beginning life, as it were, anew, or, which is much more grievous and unhappy, and from which, I earnestly pray, you may be all effectually preserved, by those temptations and allurements of vice, which tend to debauch and ruin you; for these allurements, after the manner of some robbers, attack the unwary and inexperienced with blandishments and caresses, that thereby they may have an opportunity to undo them. If therefore, as soon as ye enter upon a life of freedom, those deceitful and deadly pleasures of sense tempt you with their delusive smiles, I would put you in mind, how unworthy it is of a free and generous mind, especially that of a Christian, to become an abject slave, and submit to the most shameful bondage; how disgraceful and wretched a choice it is, to become the *slave of a mad distracted master?* and how much more generous and exalted is the pleasure of despising them all, and trampling them under foot, when they come in competition with the pure and permanent delights of divine love?

As to exalted degrees of honour, and heaps of riches, the idols of all ranks of mankind, which they worship with the rage of enthusiasm and madness,

† Λῦλον γινεσθαι παραφρονῦντος δεσπότυ.

we may not only apply to them what was observed of old concerning Hercules's statue, and say, "they have nothing divine in them *;" but also, that they are entirely void of real goodness. Even those, who have the greatest experience of them, are at last obliged to own this: the force of truth extorts the confession, though they make it with regret and against their will. All the beauty and brightness of these idols resemble the decorations of a stage, that dazzle the eyes of the vulgar, and the enjoyment of them is, in reality, but a splendid kind of slavery, and gilded misery. It is a pathetic expression of St. Bernard, "O ambition, the torture of the ambitious, how happens it, that though thou tormentest all, thou yet makest thyself agreeable to all †." O how easily does even the least glimpse of eternal and infinite beauty raze out of the mind all the impressions made upon it by the objects we daily converse with on this earth, and turn its admiration of them into contempt and disdain.

But if any one, having thoroughly examined and despised these shadows, resolves solely to pursue a more compleat knowledge of things, and follow the streams of learning, we cannot deny, that he judges more justly; yet after all, must know, if he is wise, or at least he ought to know, that he may be wise, "what vanity and superfluity is to be met with even here ‡;" for often, when one has applied himself to his books and studies, with the greatest assiduity, and almost spent his life upon them, all his pains evaporate into smoke, and the labour of years is entirely lost. And, what is most of all to be lamented, this is sometimes the case with respect to theology, which is the chief of all arts and sciences, as so large a portion of that vineyard is still possessed with briars

* ὡς οὐδέν ἐστι θεῖον.

† O! ambitio, ambientium crux, quomodo omnes torquens omnibus places?

‡ Πολλὰ ἐστι κενὰ καὶ περίεργα.

and thorns. How many are the disputes and controversies, how many the trifling arguments and cavils, which possibly may have something of the sharpness of thorns, but undoubtedly a great deal of their barrenness and their hurtful quality? A philosopher of old severely reproves the sophisters of his time in these words, "What was formerly the love of wisdom, is now become the love of words*." We, to be sure, may substitute, in place of this, a complaint still more bitter, that what was theology before, is now become foolish talking; and that many of our divines, though they serve one God, and that the God of peace, "yet split into parties upon the lightest occasions, and with great impiety divide the whole world into factions †." And I am much afraid, this evil, in a great measure, derives its original from the education of youth in schools and colleges. For the most part of men manage this business, as if disputing was the end of learning, as fighting is the design of going to war: hence the youth, when they enter the school, begin disputing, which never ends but with their life. Death imposes silence, and so, at last, "these fierce passsions of their minds, and these inveterate contentions, are composed to rest by the weight of a little dust thrown upon them‡."

As for you, young Gentlemen, if my earnest wishes, and sincere advice, can have any weight with you, you will early extricate yourselves out of these flames of contention, that your minds, being lighted up by the pure and celestial fire of the divine Spirit, may shine forth in holiness, and burn with the most fervent charity.

* Quæ philosophia fuit, facta philologia est.

† σχιζονται; κ) κόσμον ὅλον τέμνουσιν ἀθεσμῶς.

‡ Hi motus animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta
Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescunt.
VIRG. 4. Georg.

Let us Pray.

Honour and praise is due to thee, O infinite God. This is the universal voice of all the blessed spirits on high, and all the saints on earth: worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, because thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are. We, here before thee, with united, hearts and affections, offer thee, as we can, the sacrifice of gratitude, love and praise. How much are we indebted to thee for ourselves, and for all that we possess! for in thee we live, move, and have our being. Thou hast redeemed us from our sins, having given the son of thy love, as a sacrifice and ransom for our souls, the chastisement of our peace fell upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. On this consideration, we acknowledge, we are no longer at our own disposal, since we are bought with a price, and so very great a price, that we may glorify thee, O Father, and thy Son, in our souls and our bodies, which are so justly thine; may we devote ourselves to thee, through the whole remaining part of our life, and disdain the impure and ignoble slavery of sin, the world, and the flesh, that, in all things, we may demean ourselves as becomes the sons of God, and the heirs of thy celestial kingdom, and make daily greater progress in our journey towards the happy possession thereof.

Bless thy church, and our nation, and this our university: may it be thine, we pray thee: we intreat, thou would become our father, our protector, and our supreme teacher, who hast thy chair in heaven, and teachest the hearts of men on this earth. May the youth flourish under thy instruction, that they may be not only learned, but especially upright, pious and true Christians, entirely devoted to the honour of thy name, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

EXHORTATION VII.

THESE academical exercises of ours are, to be sure, no great matter, nor do we make any high account of them; yet, after all, we set no higher, perhaps even a less value upon the bustling affairs of mankind, which make a much greater noise, and the farces that are acted upon the more exalted theatres of the world, which, to speak my sentiments in a few words, are for the most part outwardly more pompous, than these of ours, but inwardly equally vain; and more insignificant than the busy amusements of children playing on the sands, and eagerly building little houses, which, with giddy levity, they instantly pull down again*. Or if you chuse to be more severe upon the fruitless labours of mankind, and their busy and irregular motions backward and forward, and from one place to another, you may, with a great man, that knew all these things by experience, compare them to the *fluttering of frightened flies, the toilsome hurry of the ants, and the motions of puppets* †. But he that, amidst all the confusions and commotions, which happen in human affairs here below, has recourse to divine contemplation, and the hopes of eternity, as the lofty impregnable tower of true wisdom, "is the only person that enjoys uninterrupted ease and tranquillity, like the heavenly bodies, which con-

* Ὡς ὅτι τὶς ψάμαθον συνάγη παῖς ἄϊχι θαλασσης,
Ὅς ῥ' ἔπει ὀν ποίησιν ἀθύρματα νηπιέτοισιν
Ἄψ ἄυθις συνέχευσε ποσι κὴ χερσιν ἀθυρων.

† Μυιδίων ἐστομένων διαδρομας, μυρμήκων ταλαιπορίας καὶ αχθοφορίας καὶ σιγιλλάρια νευροσπαστόμενα.

stantly move on in their orbits, and are never, by any violence, diverted from their course*."

And indeed, what wonder is it, that he can easily view all the dreadful appearances of this wretched life, with a resolute and steady countenance, who, by frequent interviews and daily conversation with death itself, which we call the *king of terrors* †, has rendered it familiar to him, and thereby not only divested it of its terrors, but also placed in a beautiful, pleasant, and quite amiable light. By this means, he dies daily, and doubtless, before he suffers a natural death, he dies in a more exalted sense of the word, by withdrawing, as far as is possible, his mind from the incumbrance of earthly things, and, even while it lodges in the body, weaning it from all the wordly objects, that are placed about him. And, in this very sense, philosophy of old was most properly called the *meditation of death* ‡, which the Roman orator has, in my opinion, explained with great propriety, and the precision of a philosopher. "What is it we do," says he, "when we withdraw the mind from pleasure, that is, the body, from our means and substance, that is the servant of the body, that provides for its wants, from the commonwealth, and every kind of business; what is it we then do, I say, but recall it to itself, and oblige it to stay at home? Now, to withdraw the mind from the body, is nothing else, but to learn to die §." Let us therefore, reason thus, if you will take my advice, and separate ourselves from our bodies, that is, let us ac-

* Otia solus agit, sicut cœlestia semper
Inconcussa suo volvuntur sidera lapsu. Luc. lib. ii.

† Φρικωδέστατον εἰκόνα.

‡ Μελέτη θανάτου.

§ Quid aliud agimus cum a voluptate, id est ei corpore, cum a re familiari quæ ministra est et famula corporis, cum a repub. cum a negotio omni severamus animum, quid tum agimus (inquam) nisi illum ad seipsum advocamus, & secum esse cogimus? Secernere autem a corpore animum, necquicquam aliud est quam emori discere.

custom ourselves to die: this, even while we sojourn on this earth, will be to the soul a life like to that which it will enjoy in heaven, and, being delivered from these fetters, we shall move at a better rate, the course of our souls will be less retarded in our journey to that happy place, at which, when we arrive, we can then, and then only, be truly said to live; for this life is but a kind of death, the miseries whereof I could paint, if it were seasonable; but, to be sure, it was most justly called *a life of the greatest misery** by Dionysius the Areopagite, or whoever was the author of that book, that goes under his name.

And indeed, young Gentlemen, I am of opinion, that such a view, and meditation of death, will not be unsuitable, or improper, even for you, though you are in the prime of life, and your minds in their full vigour; nay, I would gladly hope, you yourselves will not imagine it would; nor be at all offended at me, as if, by mentioning that inauspicious word unseasonably, I disturbed your present joy, drew a kind of black cloud over this bright day of festivity, or seem to mix among your laurels, a branch of the hated cypress. For a wise man would not willingly owe his joy to madness, nor think it a pleasure, foolishly to forget the situation of his affairs.

The wise man alone feels true joy, and real wisdom is the attainment of a Christian only, who bears with life, but hopes for death; and passes through all the storms and tempests of the former with an undaunted mind, but with the most fervent wishes looks for the latter, as the secure port, and the *fair heavens*† in the highest sense of the expression; whose mind is humble, and, at the same time, exalted, neither depending upon foreign, that is, external advantages, nor puffed up with his own; and neither elevated nor depressed by any turns or vicissitudes of fortune.

* Πολυπαθεστάτην ζωήν. † Καλὰς λιμένας

He is the wise man, who relishes things as they really are; who is not, with the common sort of mankind, that are always children, terrified by bugbears, nor pleased with painted rattles. Who has a greatness of soul, vastly superior to all fading and perishing things; who judges of his improvements by his life, and thinks he knows every thing he does not covet, and every thing he does not fear. The only thing he desires, is the favour and countenance of the Supreme King; the only thing he fears, is his displeasure; and, without doubt, a mind of this cast must, of necessity, be the habitation of constant serenity, exalted joy, and gladness springing from on high. And this is the man, that is truly possessed of that *tranquillity and happy disposition of mind**, *which the Philosophers boast of, the Divines recommend, but few attain.* And though he will neither willingly suffer himself to be called a philosopher, nor a philologist, yet he is, in reality, *well versed in the things of God* †, and, by a *kind of Divine influence and instruction* ‡, has attained to the light of pure and peaceable truth; where he passes his days in the greatest quietness and serenity, far above the cloudy and stormy regions of controversy and disputation.

If any of you has been thus instructed, he has certainly attained the highest of all arts, and has entered upon the most glorious liberty, even before he hath received any University degree. But the rest, though they are presently to have the title of Master of Arts, still continue a silly, servile set of men, under a heavy yoke of bondage, whereby even their minds will be crampt with oppressive laws, far more intolerable than any discipline however severe. None of you, I imagine, is so excessively blinded with *self-conceit* §, so ignorant of the nature of things, and unacquainted with himself, as to dream that he is

* ἵνθυμίαν καὶ γαλήνην. † Θεόσοφοι.

‡ Θία τινὶ μοίρα καὶ διδαχῇ. § ἀυθαδία.

already a philosopher, or be puffed up with an extravagant opinion of his own knowledge, because he has gone through the ordinary exercises at the University; though, to speak the truth, the philosophy, which prevails in the schools, is of a vain, airy nature, and more apt to inspire the mind with pride, than to improve it. As it is my earnest prayer, so it is also the object of my hope, that you will retire from this Seminary, with your minds excited to a keen and wholesome thirst after true erudition, rather than blown up with the wild-fire of science, falsely so called: And what, of all other attainments, is of greatest consequence, that you will leave us, deeply affected with the most ardent love of heavenly wisdom. Whatever may be your fate, with respect to other things, it is my earnest request, that it be your highest ambition, and your principal study, to be true Christians; that is, to be humble, meek, pure, holy, and followers of your most auspicious Captain, the Lamb, wherever he goeth; for he that followeth him shall not walk in darkness, but be conducted, through the morning light of Divine grace, to the meridian, and never-ending brightness of glory.

Let us Pray.

ETERNAL Father of mercies and of lights, the only rest of the immortal souls, which thou hast created, and their never-failing consolation: Into what by-paths of error do our souls divert, and to what dangers are they exposed on every hand, when they stray away from thee? But, while they keep within thy hiding place, O most high, they are safe under the shadow of thy wings. O how happy are they, and how well do they live, who pass their whole lives in that secret abode, where they may continually refresh themselves with the delicious fruits of thy love, and shew forth thy praise! where they may

taste and see, that thou art good, O Lord, and be thoroughly persuaded of the immense riches of thy bounty, which all our miseries cannot exceed, nor our poverty exhaust; nay, which the constant effusion of them upon the whole universe, and all its parts, cannot in the least diminish. As for us, who are before thee, the most unworthy of all thy creatures, yet, at the same time, the most excessively loaded with all the instances of thy goodness, can we avoid crying out with the united voices of our hearts, 'Let praise be ascribed to the Lord, because he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever. Who shall declare the great and wonderful works of God, who shall shew forth his praise? who ruleth by his power for ever, and his eyes observe the nations, that the rebellious may not exalt themselves; who restores our souls to life, and suffers not our feet to be moved.' But, on the other hand, alas! how justly may our songs be interrupted with bitter lamentations, that, under such strong and constant rays of his bounty, our hearts are so cold towards him? O how faint and languid is our love to him! How very little, or near to nothing, is the whole of that flame, which we feel within us, and, as that love fails within us, we misplace our affections upon the things around us; and as we follow vanity, we become vain and miserable at the same time. But may thy Spirit, O Lord, whom we humbly and earnestly beg of thee, descending into our hearts, inspire us thoroughly with life, vigour, and celestial purity.

Please to enlighten thy church throughout the whole habitable world, and particularly in these islands, with the continued light of thy countenance: if thou apply thy healing hand, we shall presently be whole; nor need we look to any quarter for other remedies, than those we have always found to be more powerful than our most obstinate distempers. Bless this city, and this celebrated university. Grant, most gracious Father, that the numbers of youth,

we send out from it this day, and every year, may, by thy effectual grace, be consecrated and devoted to thy service. Forbid, we pray thee, that they should either be the means of spreading pollution among thy people, or suffer themselves to be tainted with the infection of a wicked world; but let this fountain of learning be continually enriched with thy heavenly influences, that it may constantly supply pure and limpid streams, for the welfare and improvement of thy church and people, to the glory of thy exalted name, through our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom, with thee, and the Holy Spirit, be honour, praise, and glory, world without end. Amen.

EXHORTATION VIII.

AMIDST these amusements, we are unhappily losing a day. Yet some part of the weight of this complaint is removed, when we consider, that, while the greatest part of mankind are bustling in crouds, and places of traffic, or as they would have us believe, in affairs of great importance, we are trifling our time more innocently than they. But what should hinder us from closing this last scene in a serious manner, that is, from turning our eyes to more divine objects, whereby, though we are fatigued with other matters, we may terminate the work of this day, and the day itself agreeably; as the beams of the sun use to give more than ordinary delight, when he is near his setting?

You are now initiated into the philosophy, such as it is, that prevails in the schools, and, I imagine, intend, with all possible dispatch, to apply to higher studies. But O! how pitiful and scanty are all those things, which beset us before, behind, and on every side? The bustling we observe, is nothing but the hurrying of ants eagerly engaged in their little labours. The mind must surely have degenerated, and forgotten its original as effectually, as if it had drank of the river Lethe, if extricating itself out of all these mean concerns and designs, as so many snares laid for it, and rising above the whole of this visible world, it does not return to its Father's bosom, where it may contemplate his eternal beauty, where contemplation will inflame love, and love be crowned with the possession of the beloved object. But, in the contemplation of this

glorious object, how great caution and moderation of mind is necessary, that, by prying presumptously into his secret councils, or his nature, and rashly breaking into the *sanctuary of light* *, we be not quite involved in darkness? And, with regard to what the infinite, *independent, and necessary existent Being* †, has thought proper to communicate to us concerning himself, and we are concerned to know, even that is, by no means, to be obscured with curious impertinent questions, nor perplexed with the arrogance of disputation; because, by such means, instead of enlarging our knowledge, we are in the fair way to know nothing at all; but readily to be received by humble faith, and entertained with meek and pious affections. And if, in these notices of him, that are communicated to us, we meet with any thing obscure, and hard to be understood, such difficulties will be happily got over, not by perplexed controversies, but by constant and fervent prayer. "He will come to understand, says, admirably well, the famous Bishop of Hippo ‡, who knocks by prayer, not he, who, by quarrelling, makes a noise at the gate of truth §." But what can we, who are mortal creatures, understand, with regard to the inexpressible Being, we now speak of, especially while we sojourn in these dark prisons of clay, but only this, that we can by no means comprehend him? for though, in thinking of him, we remove from our idea all sort of imperfection, and collect together every perceivable perfection, and adorn the whole with the highest titles, we must, after all, acknowledge, that we have said nothing, and that our conceptions are nothing to the purpose. Let us there-

* Εἰς τὰ τῦ φωτὸς ἄδυτα.

† Τῶ ὄντως ὄντι.

‡ St. Augustine.

§ Intelliget qui orando pulsat, non qui rixando obstrepit ad ostium veritatis.

fore in general acknowldge him to be the immoveable Being, that moveth every thing; the immutable God, that changeth all things at his pleasure; the infinite and eternal fountain of all good, and of all existence, and the Lord and sole Ruler of the world.

If you, then, my dear youths, aspire to genuine Christianity, that is, the knowledge of God and divine things *, I would have you consider, that the mind must first be recalled and engaged to turn in upon itself, before it can be raised up towards God, according to that expression of St. Bernard, "May I return from external things to those that are within myself, and from these again rise to those that are of a more exalted nature †." But the greatest part of men live abroad, and are, truly, strangers at home; you may sooner find them any where than with themselves. Now, is not this real madness, and the highest degree of insensibility? Yet after all, they seem to have some reason in their madness, when they thus stray away from themselves, since they can see nothing within them, that by its promising aspect, can give them pleasure or delight. Every thing there is ugly, frightful, and full of nastiness, which they would rather be ignorant of, than be at the pains to purge away; and therefore prefer a slothful forgetfulness of their misery to the trouble and labour of regaining happiness. But how preposterous is the most diligent study, and the highest knowledge, when we neglect that of ourselves? The Roman philosopher, ridiculing the grammarians of his time, observes, "that they enquired narrowly into the misfortunes of Ulysses, but were quite ignorant of their own ‡." The sentiments of a wise and pious man are quite different,

* Θεοσοφιαν.

† Ab exterioribus ad interiora redeam, ab interioribus ad superiora ascendam.

‡ Ulyssis mala explorant, ignorant sua.

and I wish you may adopt them. It is his principal care to be thoroughly acquainted with himself, he watches over his own ways, he improves and cultivates his heart as a garden, nay, a garden consecrated to the King of Kings, who takes particular delight in it; he carefully nurses the heavenly plants and flowers, and roots up all the wild and noxious weeds, that he may be able to say, with the greater confidence, "Let my beloved come into his own garden, and be pleased to eat of his fruits." And when, upon this invitation, the great King, in the fullness of his goodness, descends into the mind, the soul may then easily ascend with him, as it were, in a chariot of fire, and look down upon the earth, and all earthly things, with contempt and disdain: "Then rising above the rainy regions, it sees the storms falling beneath its feet, and tramples upon the hidden thunder *."

Let us pray.

Whatever satisfaction we look for without thee, O Heavenly Father, is mere delusion and vanity; yet, though we have so often experienced this, we have not, to this day, learned to renounce this vain and fruitless labour, that we may depend upon thee, who alone can give full and complete satisfaction to the souls of men. We pray, therefore, that, by thy Almighty hand, thou wouldst so effectually join and unite our hearts to thee, that they may never be separated any more. How unhappy are they who forsake thee, and whose hearts depart from thy ways? They shall be like shrubs in the desert, they shall not see when good cometh, but dwell in a parched and barren land. Blessed, on the contrary, is he, who hath placed his confidence in thee; he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, he shall not be afraid when heat cometh, nor be uneasy in the time of drought. Take from

* Celsior exurgens pluviis nimbosq, cadentes,
Sub pedibus cernens, & cœca tonitrua calcans.

us, O Lord, whatever earthly enjoyments thou shalt think proper; there is one thing will abundantly make up all our losses, let Christ dwell in our hearts by faith, and the rays of thy favour continually refresh us in the face of this thine Anointed; in this event, we have nothing more to ask, but with grateful minds, shall for ever celebrate thy bounty, and all our bones shall say, Who is like unto thee, O Lord, who is like unto thee?

Let thy church be glad in thee, and all in this nation, and every where throughout the world, that regard and love thy name; by the power and efficacy of the gospel, may their number be daily augmented, and let the gifts of thy grace be also encreased in them all. Bless this university; let it be like a garden watered by thy heavenly hand, that thy tender shoots may grow, and in due time produce abundant fruit, to the eternal honour of thy most glorious name, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

VALEDICTORY ORATION.

THOUGH this, I imagine, is the last address I shall ever have occasion to make to you, I will not detain you long from your studies, nor encroach on the time allowed you for recreation. This is, to be sure, the first time that some of you have heard me; but I have a great many others to bear witness of the constant design of all my dissertations in this place. They will testify, that the intention of all my discourses was, "that the form of sound words*, that is, the Christain doctrine, and consequently the fear and love of God, might not only be impressed, but also engraven upon your hearts in lasting and indelible characters; and that you might not only admit as a truth, but also pay the highest regard to this indisputable maxim, "that piety and religion is the only real good among men†." Moreover, that your minds might be the less encumbered in their application to this grand study of religion, and the more expeditious in their progress therein, I constantly endeavoured, with all possible warmth, to divert you from those barren and thorny questions and disputes, that have infected the whole of theology; and this at a time, when the greatest part of divines and professors, and those of no small reputation, engaging furiously in such controversies, "have split into parties, and unhappily divided the whole world‡." It was my constant practice to establish those great and uncontroverted articles of our holy religion, which are but few and clear; some part whereof are confirmed by the common consent of nations, and of all the human race; and all the rest by the unanimous voice of the whole Christian

* ὑγιαινόντων λογων τύπ☉.

† ὅτι ἐν ᾧ μόνον ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀγαθόν ἡ ἐυσέβεια.

‡ σχιξονται, ᾧ κόσμον ὅλον τέμνουσιν ἀθέσμως.

world. Of the first sort are those we have often advanced in treating of the being and perfections of the one supreme and eternal Principle, and the production of all things by him; the continual preservation and government of the world by his Providence; the law of God given to mankind, and the rewards and punishments annexed to it. The other class of the grand articles of religion are indeed peculiar to Christian Philosophy, but believed in common by all the professors of that religion. These are the great foundations of our faith, and of all our hope and joy, with regard to the incarnation of the Son of God, his death and resurrection for the destruction of sin, and consequently of death; his ascension into the highest heavens with that same flesh of ours, in which he died, and his exaltation there above all ranks of angels, dominions and thrones, &c.; whence we expect he will return in great glory in that day, when he will be glorious in all his saints, and admired in those that believe. As many therefore as desire to receive him in this his last manifestation, with joy and exultation, must of necessity be holy, and, in conformity to their most perfect and glorious Head, sober, pious, upright, and live in full contempt of this perishing transitory world, their own mortal flesh, and the sordid pleasures of both: in a word, all the enjoyments, which the mean and servile admire, they must trample under foot and despise. For whoever will strive for this victory, and strive so as at last to obtain it, the Lord will own him for his servant, and the great Master will acknowledge him for his disciple. He will attain a likeness to God in this earth, and, after a short conflict, will triumph in the divine presence for ever. These are the doctrines, which it is our interest to know, and in the observation of which our happiness will be secured. To these you will turn your thoughts, young gentlemen, if you are wise; nay, to these you ought to give due attention, that you may be wise: these

phantoms, we catch at, fly away; this shadow of a life, we now live, is likewise on the wing. Those things, that are without the verge of sense, and above its reach, are the only solid and lasting enjoyments. "Why are ye fond of these earthly things, says St. Bernard, which are neither true riches, nor are they yours? If they are yours, continues he, take them with you *." And Lactantius admirably well observes, that "whoever prefers the life of the soul, must, of necessity, despise that of the body; nor can he aspire to the highest good, unless he despise advantages of an inferior kind. For the all-wise God did not chuse, that we should attain to immortality in a soft indolent way, but that we should gain that inexpressible reward of eternal life with the highest difficulty, and severest labour †." And, that you may not be discouraged, remember the great Redeemer of souls, your exalted Captain, hath gone before you, and we have to do with an enemy already conquered. Let us only follow him with courage and activity, and we have no ground to doubt of victory. And indeed it is a victory truly worthy of a Christian, to subdue the barbarous train of our appetites, and subject them to the empire of reason and religion: while, on the other hand, it is the most shameful bondage to have the more divine part of our composition meanly subjected to an ignoble earthly body. Now, this victory can only be secured by stedfast believing, vigorous opposition to our spiritual enemies, unwearied watching, and incessant prayer. Let prayer be not only the key that opens the day, and the lock that shuts out the night; but let it be also, from morning to night, our staff and stay in all our labours, and

* Quid terrena hæc amplectimini, quæ nec veræ divitiæ sunt, nec vestræ? Si vestræ sunt, tollite vobiscum.

† Quisquis animæ vitam maluerit, corporis vitam contemnat necesse est, nec aliter aspirare ad summum poterit bonum, nisi quæ sunt ima despexerit. Noluit enim sapientissimus Deus, nos immortalitatem delicate ac molliter assequi, sed ad illud vitæ eternæ inenarrabile præmium summa cum difficultate, & magnis laboribus pervenire.

enable us to go chearfully up into the mount of God. Prayer brings consolation to the languishing soul, drives away the devil, and is the great medium whereby all grace and peace is communicated to us. With regard to your reading, let it be your particular care to be familiarly acquainted with the Sacred Scriptures above all other books whatever; for from thence you will truly derive light for your direction, and sacred provisions for your support on your journey. In subordination to these you may also use the writings of pious men that are agreeable to them; for these also you may improve to your advantage, and particularly that little Book of à Kempis, *Of the Imitation of Christ* *, "since the sum and substance of religion consists in imitating the Being that is the object of your worship †."

May our dear Redeemer Jesus, impress upon your minds a lively representation of his own meek and immaculate heart, that, in that great and last day, he may, by this mark, know you to be his; and, together with all the rest of his sealed and Redeemed ones, admit you into the mansions of eternal bliss. Amen.

Let us pray.

ETERNAL Creator, and Supreme Governor of the world, songs of praise are due to thee in Zion; nay, as thou art infinitely superior to all our songs and hymns, even silence in Zion redounds to thy praise. Let the societies of angels be rather employed in singing thy praises; but let us with silence and astonishment, fall down at the footstool of thy throne, while they are taken up in the repitition of their celebrated doxology, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts*, who fillest the heaven and earth with thy glory! But O that we had within us proper powers for exalting that most sacred name! that name, which, according to their measure, is celebrated by all the parts of this visible

* De imitatione Christi.

† Summa religionis est imitari quem colis.

world, which surround us, the heavens, the stars, the winds, the rivers, the earth, the ocean, and all the creatures therein. Thou surely didst at first implant in us souls, and powers for this purpose, superior to the rest of the visible creation; as we were then not only qualified to offer thee praises founded on the rational conviction of our minds, and animated by the affections of our hearts; but also capable of pronouncing more articulately even the praises that result from all the rest of thy visible works. But, alas! these heavenly souls, these principles proceeding from a divine original, we have most deeply immersed in mire and dirt, nor is any hand able to extricate them out of this mud, or cleanse them from their pollution but thine. O most exalted and bountiful Father, if thou wilt graciously please to grant us this grace and favour, we shall then offer thee new songs of praise as incense, and ourselves thus renewed as a burnt offering: and all the rest of our time in this world we shall live, not to ourselves, but wholly to him who died for us.

May thy church, throughout the whole earth, and especially in these islands, be supported by thy most powerful hand, and continually be made to rejoice in the light of thy gracious countenance. Let our King be joyful in thee, as he depends on thy bounty, let him never be moved; let his throne be established in piety and righteousness, and let peace, and the gospel of peace, be the constant blessings of these kingdoms, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with thee, and the Holy Spirit, be praise, honour, and glory, now, and for ever more. Amen.

END OF VOL. IV.